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Next Week in the Journal

SEPTEMBER 16, 2004

Learner-Centered Medical Education

Kenneth Ludmerer



This Week in the Journal

SEPTEMBER 9, 2004

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

The Effect of Air Pollution on Lung Development from 10 to 18 Years of Age



David McNew/Getty Images.

Between the ages of 10 and 18 years, the lung undergoes major growth. There has been reason to believe that exposure to air pollution during this period of lung growth leads to a restriction of lung growth, but strong supporting data have been lacking. In this study,

conducted in southern California, children from communities with greater air pollution had significantly poorer lung function than children from communities with cleaner air.

Lung development is not fully realized in children who grow up in communities with polluted air. The magnitude of this effect is clinically and physiologically significant.

SEE P. 1057; EDITORIAL, P. 1132

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Results of a Home-Based Environmental Intervention among Urban Children with Asthma

Asthma is the result of both genetic and environmental influences. In this multicenter, controlled study, conducted in poor, inner-city neighborhoods, a multifaceted environmental intervention helped control asthma.

The outcome in this trial was the number of symptom-free days. The environmental interventions, all of which can easily be implemented, had a moderate positive effect.

SEE P. 1068; EDITORIAL, P. 1134

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Plasma Factor VIII and D-Dimer Levels as Predictors of Outcomes of Thrombosis in Children

In 82 children with thrombosis who were followed for up to five years, elevation of factor VIII, D-dimer, or both at diagnosis or persistent elevation during follow-up predicted a lack of thrombus resolution, recurrent thrombosis, or the post-thrombotic syndrome.

Venous thrombosis in children can be caused by a chronic inflammatory disease, which can elevate levels of factor VIII. In this study, a high level of factor VIII in children with thrombosis was independent of secondary causes.

SEE P. 1081; PERSPECTIVE, P. 1051



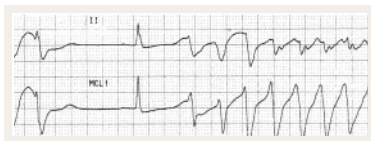
Right leg of a 14-year-old boy 12 months after deep venous thrombosis

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Erythromycin and Sudden Death from Cardiac Causes

Erythromycin is known to prolong cardiac repolarization and has been associated with case reports of torsades de pointes. In this study, the use of oral erythromycin was found to increase the risk of sudden death from cardiac causes by a factor of two. The concurrent use of erythromycin and cytochrome P-450 inhibitors, such as verapamil or diltiazem, increased the risk by a factor of five. Thus, erythromycin should not be prescribed for patients receiving these drugs.

SEE P. 1089; PERSPECTIVE, P. 1053; CME, P. 1159



CLINICAL PRACTICE

Diastolic Dysfunction

A 78-year-old woman with a history of hypertension is admitted to the hospital with congestive heart failure. Physical examination reveals a blood pressure of 180/90 mm Hg, increased jugular venous pressure, peripheral edema, and pulmonary rales. A chest radiograph shows pulmonary edema and mild cardiomegaly. An echocardiogram shows a left ventricular ejection fraction of 70 percent. The left ventricular Doppler filling pattern is abnormal and consistent with an elevated pulmonary-capillary wedge pressure. How should this patient be treated?

SEE P. 1097; CME, P. 1157

DRUG THERAPY

Thiazolidinediones

Despite a large need for new hypoglycemic therapies, given the epidemic of type 2 diabetes, very few agents have been introduced during the past 20 years. The thiazolidinediones represent a potentially important new group of drugs with a mechanism of action differing from and perhaps complementary to that of existing therapies. This article discusses present data on mechanisms, indications, and limitations of thiazolidinedione therapy.

SEE P. 1106; CME, P. 1158

CASE RECORDS OF THE MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL HOSPITAL

Newborn Twins with Thrombocytopenia, Coagulation Defects, and Hepatosplenomegaly

Newborn identical twin boys had thrombocytopenia, leukopenia, and hepatosplenomegaly. Platelet transfusions were ineffective. Screening for infections was negative. Bone marrow aspiration showed a single hemophagocytic histiocyte. Despite medical management, the patients' condition continued to worsen. A diagnostic procedure was performed.

SEE P. 1120

SOUNDING BOARD

Class — The Ignored Determinant of the Nation's Health

In this article, the authors argue that although racial and ethnic disparities in health have attracted appropriate attention, the association between health and class (i.e., income, education, and occupation) is not widely appreciated. Pointing to strong correlations between higher income and educational levels and better health, they suggest that the nation's health would be greatly enhanced by investment in social and economic policies that address class differences.

SEE P. 1137