Editorial
A message from Pediatric Annals’ Editor-in-Chief.

I am beginning this column with a tribute to Dr. Marc O. Beem, the former Professor of Pediatrics and long-time Chief of the Division of Infectious Diseases at the University of Chicago, who died on September 29, 2014, at 91 years old. I met Marc while I was a third-year medical student, rotating through his service at the University of Chicago. He was particularly—with his gentle, thoughtful, and methodical approach to patients, teaching, and research—instrumental in my career choices of Pediatrics and Infectious Diseases. Marc’s publications included early reports from the National Institutes of Health on the “chimpanzee coryza virus,” better known to pediatricians everywhere as RSV. He also published classic papers in the New England Journal of Medicine in 1977, in the Journal of Pediatrics in 1986, and in Pediatrics in 1979, defining infantile chlamydial pneumonitis.

This issue of Pediatric Annals focuses on Child Neglect and Maltreatment, with Howard Dubowitz, MD, MS, FAAP, serving as guest editor. Scott D. Krugman, MD, MS, FAAP, focuses on the importance of pediatric advocacy when tackling issues related to child neglect. James Anderst, MD, MSCI, and Mary Moffatt, MD, discuss adequate supervision of children as well as adolescents, who tend to receive decreased direct supervision as they age. Maureen M. Black, PhD, and Chloe R. Drennen explore the relationship of child neglect and nutrition, including both undernutrition and obesity, while Stephen C. Boos, MD, FAAP, and Kristine Fortin, MD, MPH, provide a systematic overview of child neglect with definitions and recommendations for practitioners. Lastly, Dubowitz reviews the promising Safe Environment for Every Kid (SEEK) model, which uses a targeted brief questionnaire for rapid identification of possible neglect that is useful in the office, and it’s included in the American Academy of Pediatrics’ Bright Future® materials.

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Examples of child neglect in our society have figured in several recent high-profile news stories. At one extreme is the murder of the five Jones siblings in South Carolina allegedly by their father, a 32-year-old engineer, who had been investigated on at least two previous occasions for physical abuse. In a less extreme, but still high-profile case, Minnesota Vikings running back Adrian Peterson was accused of child abuse after admitting that he disciplined his 4-year-old son with a “switch,” severely enough to be associated with bleeding, bruising, and scarring. This became apparent after the child was returned to his mother in another state after a stay with his father.

Beyond these high-profile, attention-getting cases of child abuse and neglect are the alarmingly high numbers of such cases that escape the headlines. In Illinois, for example, recent data from the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services from July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2014 indicate that 87 of 210 child deaths that were investigated involved credible evidence of abuse (26) or neglect (61), with 29 additional deaths awaiting an official ruling. In the previous 12 months, there was a record 111 such child deaths (32 abuse-related, 79 neglect-related), with two more still being investigated. Illinois’ 30-year average is 77 abuse- or neglect-related child deaths annually. National data indicate about 1,640 child deaths from abuse and neglect each year, about 2.2 deaths/100,000 children.

This dreadful toll merits reminders because we as physicians and protectors of children clearly need to continue to be vigilant and alert to the signs of child abuse and/or neglect. The reviews in this
issue contain information about screening methods that can help to identify risk factors for abuse and for neglect as well as review of some nonfatal consequences of these problems.

**THIS MONTH’S STAMPS**

I’ve chosen a souvenir sheet from Tuvalu, an island nation in the Pacific, to accompany this column. This is a companion piece to one published in the July 2014 issue of *Pediatric Annals* and honors the 65th anniversary of the World Health Organization (WHO), celebrated on April 7, 2013. WHO is the coordinating health authority of the United Nations and is now very active in the battle against Ebola. On this sheet, six annual “World Days” are highlighted, each on its own stamp: World Tuberculosis Day (March 24), World Immunization Week (last week of April), World Health Day (April 7), World AIDS Day (September 1), World No Tobacco Day (May 31), and World Blood Donor Day (June 14). Of course much work remains for all of these public health issues, but the unprecedented and uncontrolled Ebola epidemic in West Africa dominates WHO activities now.

**REFERENCES**


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