seronegative. The total number of girls vaccinated or immune would have been (503+70) 573 (97.8%) before the programme and (573+4) 577 (98.5%) afterwards. Professor Smithell's figures of 566 and 570 respectively are probably due to an inadvertent miscalculation. In other words, there were 13 (2.2%) seronegative girls before and nine (1.5%) after the programme. The vaccination of four girls is worth the estimated cost of at most a few hundred pounds. There are still 20 cases a year of congenital rubella syndrome. Until rubella disease is eliminated it is extremely important to achieve an uptake of 100% in women of child bearing age. If the study had been completely successful all 13 girls would have been vaccinated.

Reference

Reflex anal dilatation associated with severe chronic constipation in children

Sir,

Reflex anal dilatation is an important sign associated with anal abuse in children. The buttocks are parted gently and the examiner waits for up to 30 seconds. Where the sign is present, the anal sphincter dilates to up to 2–3 cm and a view of the interior of the rectum is observed. The anus then frequently closes and then reopens in a dynamic fashion.

Dr Clayden describes a 'visibly relaxed anus such as one sees when a large faecal mass has chronically distended the rectum leading to a sphincter which is dilated'—there is no suggestion of the dynamic findings of reflex anal dilatation described in his paper.2 Perhaps if doctors could agree a common vocabulary,1 then these kind of irrelevant disagreements would not exist.

References

C J Hobbs and J M Wynne
St James's University Hospital,
Beckett Street,
Leeds LS9 7TF