

We agree that treatment itself is likely to be an important factor in subsequent nutritional progress and in our study the prevalence of malnutrition, identified by arm anthropometry, rose to 46% over a median follow up period of 7.5 months.²

We conclude therefore that malnutrition in children with cancer is more common than generally recognised, particularly so at diagnosis, and that impaired energy intake is a factor in its causation. Further studies such as those by Bond and coworkers are required to explore the suggestion that changes in energy utilisation are also important, either at diagnosis or during treatment. Clinicians however must be aware of the greater incidence of malnutrition in these children and initiate appropriate strategies for nutritional support.⁶

MCG STEVENS
IW BOOTH
The Children's Hospital,
Ladywood Middleway,
Ladywood,
Birmingham B16 8ET

DE SMITH
Department of Paediatrics,
Harrogate General Hospital,
Harrogate,
North Yorkshire HG2 7ND

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Rehabilitation and outcome after severe head injury

SIR,—The recent paper by Scott-Jupp *et al* is an important contribution to the subject of rehabilitation of head injured children.¹ It correctly highlights the inadequacy of present services including support and training for teachers who provide long term educational services.

We studied 220 children of whom half were followed up for three years after injury.² We found a substantial cognitive improvement between one and three years, a time when rehabilitation programmes have often ceased. Reporting on cognitive and behavioural problems at six months after severe injury must include many still in the early stages of recovery and before these cognitive gains have occurred.

In our study the relationship between length of coma and outcome is clear. Of 109 patients still comatose on transfer to rehabilitation (median 62 days) 48 remained completely dependent for all activities of daily living, against only one with partial dependency of 111 admitted conscious. The outcome in patients still comatose at three months and six months after injury was also found to be quite different.

Of interest is the fact that 87 (35%) of our children had a history of learning disorder or had shown attention deficit, impulsiveness, or emotional behavioural problems before injury. This would support the authors' impression that many of their children did have pre-existing problems placing them at increased risk for injury.

The data from Scott-Jupp *et al* is interesting,¹ but only a small number of children were followed up for a substantial time and the results must be interpreted with caution.

MARY G BOYER
Birmingham Accident Hospital,
Bath Row,
Birmingham B15 1NA

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Paediatrics in the accident and emergency department

SIR,—I read the article by Phillips and Robson with interest.¹ The writers say that the Specialty Advisory Committee requires only three months paediatric experience before accreditation as a consultant. In 1974 when a working party was set up to discuss the training programmes for consultants in charge of emergency departments and the possibility of planning a programme for senior registrars, paediatrics was listed as being 'a minor speciality' and it was with the greatest difficulty that I managed to persuade other members of the working party that it was so important that a specific requirement of time should be included.

I agree that three months is not enough but I can assure you that to achieve even that was a considerable victory.

I have felt for a long time that community paediatricians could play a most useful part in accident and emergency departments where children are seen but which are not part of a children's hospital. Appointments that are linked between the hospitals and the community are valuable at junior levels and can be even more so at senior ones.

A properly run paediatric accident and emergency department can save money for a hospital by reducing the numbers of children who are admitted. This can apply with many types of problems. One example among many, in Sheffield, is that of the about 200 children who are seen each year with acutely painful hips, the majority are dealt with without admission.

Many x ray films, drugs, and unnecessary investigations can be avoided with benefit both to the child and to the finances of the hospital. A lot of problems, medical, surgical and social, can be recognised at an early stage and treated.

More children are brought to accident and emergency departments than to all outpatient departments put together—they deserve a service that is appropriate to their needs and to the needs of their parents.

CYNTHIA ILLINGWORTH
8 Harley Road,
Sheffield S11 9SD

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Intravenous volume replacement: which fluid and why?

SIR,—Lucinda Huskisson has done well in her outline of the continuing debate on which fluid to use during resuscitation.¹ Doctors involved in the resuscitation of major trauma are now increasingly using the methodology of Advanced Trauma Life Support.² This concentrates on the first hour after trauma—the 'golden hour'—and presents a standardised approach to the management of trauma. With regard to fluid replacement, Hartmann's solution and blood are the only two fluids advocated. In the child a regimen of three challenges of 20 ml of Hartmann's solution per kg is advised followed by 10 ml per kg of blood if the patient is still unstable. Continuing instability as judged by cardiac status, conscious level, skin perfusion, and urine output should prompt definitive operative care. Paediatricians who find themselves involved in resuscitation in the accident and emergency department should be aware of this protocol as it serves to keep arguments over crystalloids and colloids out of the resuscitation room—as Dr Huskisson demonstrates by her 57 references that debate takes longer than a golden hour.

TOM LLEWELLYN
Accident and Emergency Department,
East Birmingham Hospital,
Bordesley Green East,
Birmingham B9 5ST

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Sister journals

SIR,—David Mellor was undoubtedly right to criticise the English translations of the titles and abstracts of articles published in *Archives Françaises de Pédiatrie*.¹ Some of them were certainly inaccurate and/or clumsy. We have taken his comments to heart and retained a biomedical translator. Let us hope that he will soon have no cause for such comments.

Dr Mellor cannot understand why there are many fewer original articles and clinical reports in *Archives Françaises de Pédiatrie* than in *Archives of Disease in Childhood*. There are two very simple explanations. First, French paediatricians publish their best work in English language, mainly American, journals. Curiously, the dominance of English in the scientific world has led clinicians and researchers wanting to be sure that their work is known to publish in English. This is exacerbated by the tendency of granting bodies in France to give a priority to such publications.

Second, many of the subscribers to *Archives Françaises de Pédiatrie* are more interested in articles on new techniques, analyses, and applications than in research articles. This problem is not peculiar to French paediatrics; several other European journals have the same balance. The survival of our journal depends on the number of subscribers, and more and more of them do not want articles that are too research oriented or that deal with very rare conditions. This may be unfortunate, but it is the case.

The French, in common with other Europeans, probably have less difficulty reading and writing English than the English have in