

children in a sensitive way. After all, we do not put a badge on the child with a learning problem saying 'I'm stupid, please give me extra teaching'. Surely we can apply the same principles and sensitivity to children with potential anaphylactic reactions.

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1 Patel L, Radivan FS, David TJ. Management of anaphylactic reactions to food [Letter]. *Arch Dis Child* 1995; 72: 274.

Ectodermal dysplasia and immunodeficiency

EDITOR,—Immunodeficiency has been previously described in patients with ectodermal dysplasia¹; surprisingly it was not mentioned at all in the recent review article on ectodermal dysplasia in this journal.² Immunodeficiency is not a constant feature in all patients with ectodermal dysplasia, it is often transient and variable and no consistent T or

B cell abnormality has been found.¹ The exact nature of the association between these two rare conditions is unclear and the question remains as to whether different immune defects in patients with ectodermal dysplasia represent a coincidental association or whether immunodeficiency is an underrecognised feature of the ectodermal dysplasia syndrome. In two recent classifications of primary immunodeficiency disorders ectodermal dysplasia is listed under 'syndromes associated with immunodeficiency'.^{3 4}

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- 1 Brooks KG, Klimpel GR, Vaidya S, *et al.* Thymic hypoplasia and T cell deficiency in ectodermal dysplasia: case report and review of the literature. *Clin Immunol Immunopathol* 1994; 71: 44–52.
- 2 Masse J-F, Perusse R. Ectodermal dysplasia. *Arch Dis Child* 1994; 71: 1–2.
- 3 Stiehm ER. New and old immunodeficiencies. *Pediatr Res* 1993; 33 (suppl): S2–8.
- 4 Report of a WHO Scientific Group. Primary immunodeficiency disease. *Clin Exp Immunol* 1995; 99 (suppl 1): 1–24.

How to write a scientific paper

EDITOR,—I enjoyed Professor Lilleyman's excellent article on how to write a scientific paper.¹ Unfortunately he doesn't mention the importance of acknowledgments and thanks. More and more papers it seems to me are based on other people's data and are largely the results of postal surveys, with the authors merely analysing the data and writing the paper, but not seeing any patients or collecting any data themselves. I think it is even more important in these circumstances to acknowledge and thank those who have taken the trouble to reply to the questionnaires. This lack of courtesy might even be the reason why some surveys have an unsatisfactory response rate.

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- 1 Lilleyman JS. How to write a scientific paper – a rough guide to getting published. *Arch Dis Child* 1995; 72: 268–70.