

We all have difficulty diagnosing asthma in young children. Some would say we are guilty of overdiagnosing asthma in this age group in primary care. Bush, in his extremely informative, rather provocative review on diagnosing asthma in pre-school children, addresses many of the issues. What are your thoughts on the points raised in this paper? We look forward to receiving some correspondence for publication in our letters section!

Patient compliance or non-adherence to recommended therapy is a problem facing many health professionals. The paper by Hand *et al* helps us to understand some of the reasons for this behaviour through patients' beliefs about their asthma inhalers. This paper is part of a project to develop an instrument for practice or research. This work is important and may prove to be extremely useful in the future, especially if the final instrument can be used routinely, to inform health professionals during asthma consultations.

Clark introduces the concept of 'significant event audit' as a means of investigating and raising awareness of difficult primary care management issues. In this audit and in his literature review, Clark highlights the fact that β -blockers are sometimes

inadvertently co-prescribed with anti-asthma therapy. There is clearly a need for greater vigilance when prescribing drugs that may adversely affect our patients. Similar audits could be triggered by other types of 'significant asthma events' in primary care; such as acute severe asthma attacks – are there any preventable features? Other topics include asthma deaths, hospital admissions and patients running out of medication. We look forward to getting more papers utilising similar methodology.

Lewis and Ebden present a review of asthma in pregnancy. This well referenced paper describes aspects of epidemiology and thoroughly details the risks and benefits of current medication used in pregnancy. This paper provides answers to many of the common questions asked by pregnant patients who happen to have asthma as well. Finally, Cook and Sheikh continue their helpful series on statistics with a paper on interpreting results. They have tackled odds ratios, relative risk and numbers needed to treat – useful for anyone trying to understand research papers. ■

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