



uation, misinterpretation would be more likely because of the rarity of seeing patients with these marks.

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Contact tracing for pertussis

We were delighted to see a concise summary of the problem of pertussis in the *CMAJ* Public Health column.¹ However, medical practice in our region differs in one important respect. Authors Theresa Tam and Adwoa Bentsi-Enchill indicate that if a symptomatic patient is clearly linked to a laboratory-confirmed case, no nasopharyngeal swab is needed. This is the opposite of our investigative approach. We are interested in confirming all cases, so that our contact tracing net can be cast as widely as possible. Physicians in our region are encouraged to obtain a swab from all symptomatic contacts when antibiotic prophylaxis is started.

Practitioners on the “front lines” eagerly await 3 major changes that

will reduce patients’ suffering from this condition. First is the administration of a safe, effective vaccine to all members of the population at large. In this regard, is the new acellular pertussis vaccine the answer? We are also looking forward to widespread use of a more rapid, economical and reliable diagnostic test, so that contact tracing can be done earlier. Finally, we are hoping for federal approval of other antibiotics for indications of pertussis that might result in better elimination of the organism through superior compliance (e.g., azithromycin).

David F. Ross, MD

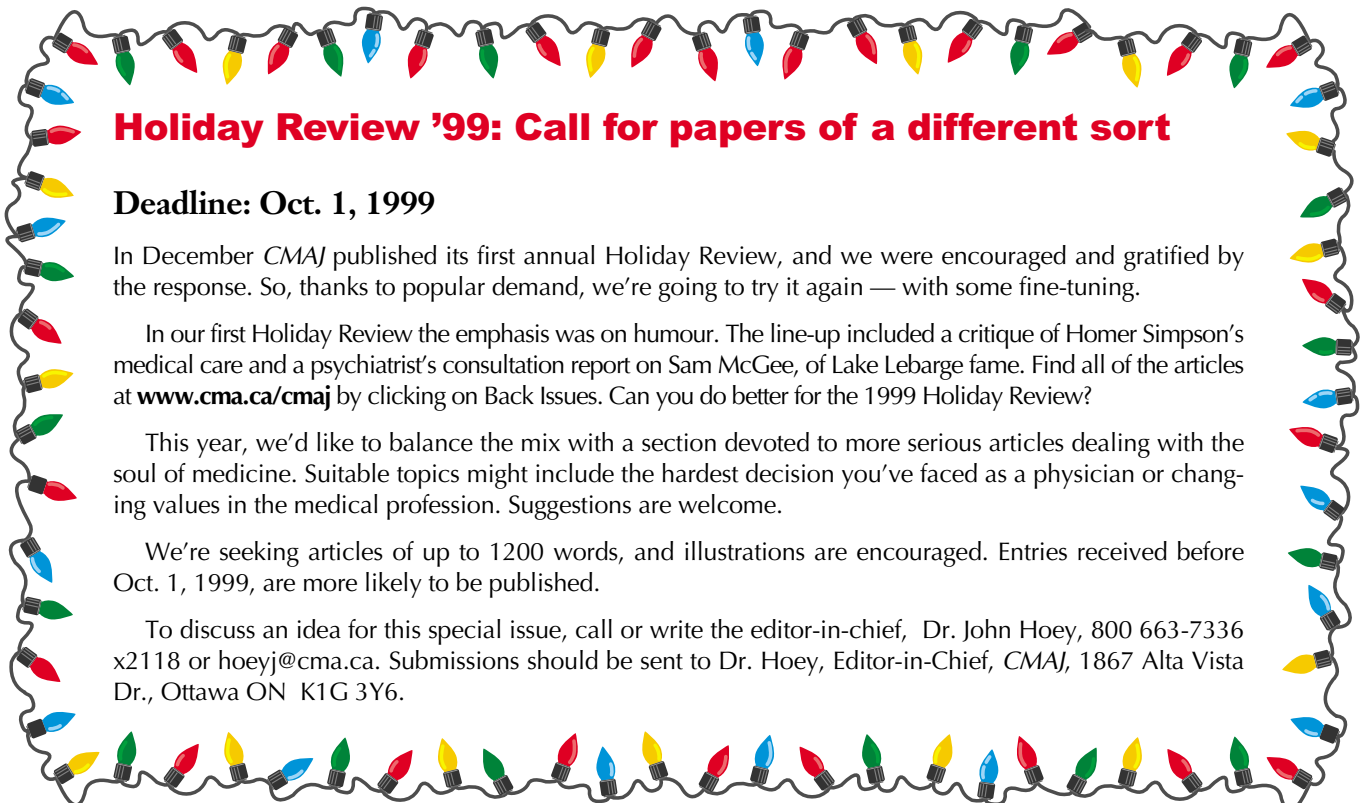
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Holiday Review '99: Call for papers of a different sort

Deadline: Oct. 1, 1999

In December *CMAJ* published its first annual Holiday Review, and we were encouraged and gratified by the response. So, thanks to popular demand, we’re going to try it again — with some fine-tuning.

In our first Holiday Review the emphasis was on humour. The line-up included a critique of Homer Simpson’s medical care and a psychiatrist’s consultation report on Sam McGee, of Lake Lebarge fame. Find all of the articles at www.cma.ca/cmaj by clicking on Back Issues. Can you do better for the 1999 Holiday Review?

This year, we’d like to balance the mix with a section devoted to more serious articles dealing with the soul of medicine. Suitable topics might include the hardest decision you’ve faced as a physician or changing values in the medical profession. Suggestions are welcome.

We’re seeking articles of up to 1200 words, and illustrations are encouraged. Entries received before Oct. 1, 1999, are more likely to be published.

To discuss an idea for this special issue, call or write the editor-in-chief, Dr. John Hoey, 800 663-7336 x2118 or hoeyj@cma.ca. Submissions should be sent to Dr. Hoey, Editor-in-Chief, *CMAJ*, 1867 Alta Vista Dr., Ottawa ON K1G 3Y6.