

Consider celiac disease

Re: "Idiopathic small-bowel intussusception in an adult."¹ An important but under-recognized etiology of adult small bowel intussusception without a "lead point" is celiac disease. In rare cases, intussusception may be the initial presentation of adult celiac disease. If not done already, the patient in the present case, even if asymptomatic, should be investigated for this possibility.

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REFERENCE

1. Renzulli P, Candinas D. Idiopathic small-bowel intussusception in an adult. *CMAJ* 2010;182:E148.

For the full letter, go to: www.cmaj.ca/cgi/letters/182/3/E148#320869

DOI:10.1503/cmaj.110-2060

Pets in airplane cabins: Pro

As an academic physician and a pilot, I was outraged by this editorial.¹ The unsupported statement "Pets can be accommodated comfortably and safely in airplane cargo holds, which is where they belong" got my dander up. A cursory Internet search brought up documented accounts of hundreds of companion animals that have perished in cargo holds. Cargo holds are usually not heated, air conditioned or pressurized and often are unventilated in order to reduce fire hazard. People do need to sometimes travel with pets and it is

wrong to send the pets to the cargo hold. Most (not all) pet allergies are due to direct contact, not proximity to pets, which can be minimized by keeping the pets in travel cages. Are you next going to suggest banning people who might have pet hair or dander on their clothes from flights because of the theoretical possibility that they may also cause allergies in the susceptible? The evidence is about the same.

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REFERENCE

1. Stanbrook MB, Kovesi T, Hébert PC. Pets in airplane cabins: an unnecessary allergic hazard. *CMAJ* 2010;182:421.

For the full letter, go to: www.cmaj.ca/cgi/letters/182/5/421#334758

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Pets in airplane cabins: Con

The Canadian Society of Allergy and Clinical Immunology welcomes your recent editorial regarding pets in airplane cabins.¹ It was through the society that Air Canada made its decision in 2006 to ban the carriage of pets on board, because of the dangers to passengers with serious animal dander allergies. When Air Canada reversed this policy in July 2009, we contacted them immediately to express our concerns. We have also discussed these issues with WestJet. As the national society representing allergists and clinical immunologists throughout Canada, and with the welfare of our patients firmly in mind, we support the effort to allow pet-allergic individuals to travel by air in safety and comfort.

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REFERENCE

1. Stanbrook MB, Kovesi T, Hébert PC. Pets in air-

plane cabins: an unnecessary allergic hazard. *CMAJ* 2010;182:421.

For the full letter, go to: www.cmaj.ca/cgi/letters/182/5/421#294587

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Predictive genotype

The article by Fernando and Broadfoot¹ summarizes the important issues of drug-induced severe skin reactions. It is very important to note that genotype-based identification of those Han Chinese patients who may develop severe skin reactions to carbamazepine is now possible. However, we need to clearly understand a downside of this approach. Namely, a positive predictive value of the HLA-B*1502 genotyping is only 7.7%, as the authors suggested, or may be even less. The authors' statement that "in 3% of patients who are test-positive, the disease may never develop with exposure to carbamazepine" could be interpreted in different ways. Because the 3% is a false positive rate of the genotyping test in Han Chinese, it is better to state as follows: "If we test 1000 Han Chinese patients who will never develop the severe skin reactions to carbamazepine, 30 of them (3%) will be positive on the HLA-B*1502 genotyping."

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REFERENCE

1. Fernando SL, Broadfoot AJ. Prevention of severe cutaneous adverse drug reactions: the emerging value of pharmacogenetic screening. *CMAJ* 2010;182:476-80.

For the full letter, go to: www.cmaj.ca/cgi/letters/182/5/476#322816

DOI:10.1503/cmaj.110-2061

Driving for seniors

The editorial on driving and seniors¹ addresses some of the problems that are

Letters to the editor

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