gency, psychiatry and other medical specialties about psychiatry and medical comorbidities
- conducting further research to understand the attitudinal aspects inherent in various specialties, including what messages are being learned and taught as part of the hidden curriculum of medicine[2]
- making ongoing efforts to continue to decrease stigma of mental illness
- advocating for patients who cannot advocate for thier own medical care.

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Folic acid in older adults

I could not agree more with Colapinto and colleagues' interpretation of the results of their study of folate status in Canada.[1] I'd like to raise awareness of the need to protect another population group: older adults.

An overwhelming proportion of older people aged between 65 and 94 years had elevated levels of total folate in a seven-year cohort (1997–2004).[2] The levels were elevated in 84% of people obtaining folic acid exclusively from their diet (i.e., not taking folic acid supplements) as opposed to 100% in those taking multivitamins. Moreover, total folate levels were found to increase at an annual rate of 234 ng/mL ($p < 0.001$) since the beginning of fortification in 1998 and had not reached a plateau by 2004.

Because this population is not at child-bearing age, the only advantage of fortification is a reduction of homocysteine levels. Elevated levels of homocysteine, however, were reduced from 13% to 7% by 2000, but they increased again to 16%. Thus, the benefit of folic acid fortification in older adults was not maintained despite continuously increasing levels of total folate.

Older adults are at the highest risk of malignancy, so exposing them to further increases of folate seems unreasonable and possibly dangerous. I urge Health Canada to consider all populations before deciding to increase the concentration of folic acid in products consumed every day by everyone.

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***CMAJ* 2011. DOI:10.1503/cmaj.111-2040**

Some letters have been abbreviated for print. See www.cmaj.ca for full versions.

Correction

Poignant tales of refugees in Canada

In the film review published in the Feb. 22, 2011 issue of *CMAJ*, the name of the medical coordinator of the Bridge Clinic was misspelled. The correct name is Dr. Maureen Mayhew. We apologize for any inconvenience this error may have caused.

Reference

1. Pottie K. Poignant tales of refugees in Canada. *CMAJ* 2011;3:350.

***CMAJ* 2011. DOI:10.1503/cmaj.111-2037**

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