

the travellers may make decisions on the means of passage they will take on the basis of their best intentions to reach a destination.

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**Reference**

1. Cook DJ, Giacomini M, Johnson N, Willms D, for the Canadian Critical Care Trials Group. Life support in the intensive care unit: a qualitative investigation of technological purposes. *CMAJ* 1999;161(9):1109-13.

**A fine old country doctor**

I read Edward Ralph's editorial on Powassan encephalitis with interest.<sup>1</sup> Powassan is a small community 35 km south of North Bay, Ont. A family doctor, R.H. Dillane, practised there for more than 50 years, and he diagnosed the disease that became known as the Powassan virus.

He referred the patient to Toronto and told the specialists at the Hospital for Sick Children how the child had contracted the disease. The specialists and researchers agreed with his diagno-

sis and then named the disease the Powassan virus.

RH, as he was known, never sent bills. He practised 7 days a week. He made house calls. In winter, he would travel with team and cutter. He never made much money. One year, when many doctors were away at the war, he delivered 233 babies in a house in town with the help of a nurse. He was highly regarded as an excellent diagnostician. It was said that, with little more than a history and physical examination, "he could just smell the problem."

A local newspaper once published a photo of a doctor who was retiring from practice and commented that he had delivered 1000 babies. RH had a good chuckle over that one. "Heck," he said, "I had a 1000 deliveries for which I never got paid."

How nice it would have been if this disease had been called the Dillane virus in honour of the fine old country doctor who discovered it.

**William J. Copeman**

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**Reference**

1. Ralph ED. Powassan encephalitis. *CMAJ* 1999;161(11):1416-7.

**Correction**

Owing to a production error, the reference footnotes are missing from the text of Christopher Doig's recent commentary.<sup>1</sup> The corrected text is available on *eCMAJ* (<http://www.cma.ca/cmaj/vol-162/issue-3/issue-3.htm>).

**Reference**

1. Doig C. Education of medical students and house staff to prevent hazardous occupational exposure. *CMAJ* 2000;162(3):344-5.

**CMAJ index  
L'index du JAMC**

The index for volume 161 (July–December 1999) of *CMAJ* was mailed with this issue to paid subscribers and to CMA members who requested it from the CMA Member Service Centre. Others may order single copies for \$15 (within Canada; add 7% GST/15% HST as applicable) or US\$15 (outside Canada).

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