Training pediatricians

A recent item in the CMA Bulletin discussed a proposal from the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (RCPSC) to reduce the number of PGY-1 training programs from approximately 30 to just a few “generalist competency” training streams. This proposal has been presented as an alternative to the “common PGY-1 year,” previously discussed as a model to improve medical students’ flexibility in deciding on a career path.

The Residents Section of the Canadian Paediatric Society (CPS), representing over 500 pediatric residents in Canada, has a mandate to examine and ensure the quality of pediatric training in Canada. In a recent survey, members of the Residents Section expressed interest in the common PGY-1 year and emphasized the importance of retaining 4 years of pediatric training to allow proper development of the skills of Canada’s pediatricians. Allowing for additional flexibility in residency training while encouraging residents’ interests in a given specialty during their first year of training might also accomplish the goal of preventing early and later-regretted career decisions. We are therefore pleased that pediatric training will be represented in the new RCPSC model and look forward to examining the proposal in detail. The goals already identified remain the same: increased flexibility for residents and medical students while maintaining the depth and quantity of pediatric residency training. We continue to oppose any move to shorten training in pediatric specialty rotations. We believe that the medical treatment of children presents unique challenges, disease processes and training goals and that few of these goals would be met during rotation through adult specialties. As such, maintaining a PGY-1 year with focused pediatric rotations and improved flexibility for those residents who wish to transfer to or from a program may represent the ideal solution.

Eric I. Benchimol
President, Residents Section
Canadian Paediatric Society
Ottawa, Ont.

References
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Tintin in CMAJ

The article by Antoine Cyr and associates is a fascinating perspective into the enigmatic delayed development of Tintin. The researchers must be commended for such insightful extrapolation from the limited source material. One wonders about Asterix and Obelix and the possible glandular or other systemic deficiencies that might be contributing to their sizes, body masses and apparent halted development. Perhaps the toxicity of cartoon ink should be independently evaluated.

Brent L. Hay
Calgary, Alta.

Reference
1. Cyr A, Cyr LO, Cyr C. Acquired growth hormone deficiency and hypogonadotropic hypogonadism in a subject with repeated head trauma, or Tintin goes to the neurologist. CMAJ 2004;171(12):1433-4.
DOI:10.1503/cmaj.1050014

Letters

References
DOI:10.1503/cmaj.1050055

With Hergé’s approval, Frederic Tuten wrote Tintin in the New World, wherein Tintin meets the seductive Claudia in Peru. One night, “sighs float to the ceiling...a blue glow emanates from the bed center...two animals collide and adhere.” Tintin is cured!

Young coauthors Antoine Cyr and Louis-Olivier Cyr might wait a few years before trying this book, but I bet their more senior coauthor Claude Cyr
would love it. The familiar characters appear, and the inside cover art is by Roy Lichtenstein.

Tom J. McGuire
Berkeley Fire Department
Berkeley, Calif.

References
2. Cyr A, Cyr LO, Cyr C. Acquired growth hormone deficiency and hypogonadotropic hypogonadism in a subject with repeated head trauma, or Tintin goes to the neurologist. CMAJ 2004; 171(12):1433-4.

[One of the authors responds:] From these readers' comments about our Tintin article1 I have learned that excluding fantasy from science amounts to foolish neglect of an opportunity to develop interest in science and research. The positive impact of this project on my children was equal to the article's impact on busy doctors, some of whom spoke to me for the first time after reading the study. Their smiles provided relief from the winter blues. Suddenly, stressed surgeons began sharing with me their childhood memories about Tintin and assured me that they will read Hergé's work again to confirm the findings we reported. This alone was worth jeopardizing my reputation as a "serious researcher."

As Douglas Adams wrote, "Science has achieved some wonderful things of course, but I'd far rather be happy than right any day." Maybe we weren't right, but this publication certainly made my sons happy. As it turned out, Dec. 7, 2004, the publication date of our article, was by coincidence the 6th birthday of Antoine, first author on the article. I want to thank the journal and the lay media for making me look like the best dad in his eyes. He is convinced that I arranged coast-to-coast media coverage as a special birthday celebration.

Claude Cyr
Pediatrician
Département de pédiatrie
Université de Sherbrooke
Sherbrooke, Que.

References
1. Cyr A, Cyr LO, Cyr C. Acquired growth hormone deficiency and hypogonadotropic hypogonadism in a subject with repeated head trauma, or Tintin goes to the neurologist. CMAJ 2004; 171(12):1433-4.

Corrections
The DOI attached to a letter to the editor1 published last year should have read 10.1503/cmaj.1050132.

Reference

The DOI attached to a Query article1 published last year should have read 10.1503/cmaj.1050133.

Reference

Mécanisme de présentation des lettres
Le site amélioré des cyberlettres du JAMC est désormais le portail de réception de tous les textes destinés à la chronique Lettres. Pour rédiger une cyberlettre, consultez un article sur le site www.jamc.ca et cliquez ensuite sur le lien «Lettres électroniques : répondre à cet article», dans la boîte en haut à droite de l'article. Toutes les cyberlettres seront étudiées pour une éventuelle publication dans le journal imprimé.

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