

type of immune response mustered. Is the development of SIRS with H1N1 a Th2 phenomenon and could it explain the susceptibility of pregnant women and Aboriginal or Mexican populations to this complication? The cytokines produced in the Th2 response have been implicated in the development of SIRS.<sup>2</sup> The type of immune response a person has on contact with H1N1 determines the outcome and it may be that a Th2 or similar response heralds severe complications. It is to be hoped that a reduction in incidence of H1N1 influenza with vaccination will compensate for any change in the rate of H1N1-related SIRS. Science would have been preferable to hoping-for-the best but it is too late for that now.

**Vivian C. McAlister**

University of Western Ontario  
London, Ont.

#### REFERENCES

1. Hébert PC, MacDonald N. Preparing for pandemic (H1N1) 2009. *CMAJ* 2009;181:6-7.
2. Miller AC, Rashid RM, Elamin EM. The "T" in trauma: the helper T-cell response and the role of immunomodulation in trauma and burn patients. *J Trauma* 2007;63:1407-17.

**For the full letter, go to:** [www.cmaj.ca/cgi/eletters/181/6-7/E102#191579](http://www.cmaj.ca/cgi/eletters/181/6-7/E102#191579)

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## Spain and swine flu

In Spain, physicians have joined a "common sense and self-control" policy concerning swine flu. The movement started Aug. 10 as an initiative of Dr. Juan Gérvas ([www.equipocesca.org](http://www.equipocesca.org)) and has been joined by the Spanish Medical Association (representing about 200 000 physicians) and blogs belonging to health care professionals. It is important to raise awareness of the common sense position and reach out to society, to counter a campaign of panic, hype and disease mongering. Even though it is a more contagious flu, swine flu is a milder disease than seasonal flu. This means that the enforcement of strict protocols (with its para-

phernalia of astronaut-like suits and isolation areas) and of measures such as closing down schools and universities are absurd and reveal a lack of common sense, self-control and scientific foundations. The diversion of financial resources toward a minor problem is potentially damaging, because it drains the energy of the health system and neglects all other important health problems that will continue to afflict society.

**Juan Gérvas MD**

Spain

**Tiago Villanueva**, family medicine  
resident, Portugal

#### REFERENCE

1. Hébert PC, MacDonald N. The H1N1 vaccine race: Can we beat the pandemic? *CMAJ* 2009. DOI:10.1503/cmaj.091560

**For the full letter, go to:** [www.cmaj.ca/cgi/eletters/cmaj.091560v1#186710](http://www.cmaj.ca/cgi/eletters/cmaj.091560v1#186710)

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## Bedbugs and health

Re: Severe anemia from bedbugs, Practice Sept. 1.<sup>1</sup> As a pest controller in the poorest postal code with the highest drug abuse problem in Canada, I am often called in to deal with residences of alcohol and drug abusers. After seeing hundreds of these cases, I came to the theory that the bedbug could affect their physical health. I felt that this could be unfounded as I am not a medical professional. I know that one case does not prove the matter but this should lead to investigation into the situation. Bravo for the observational skills of the doctor and the fact that the home of the patient was actually visited, for clinic visits are generally prepared for and we do lie to our doctors.

**Richard Lorenzen**

Vancouver, BC

#### REFERENCE

1. Pritchard JM, Hwang SW. Severe anemia from bedbugs. *CMAJ* 2009; 181:287-288.

**For the full letter, go to:** [www.cmaj.ca/cgi/eletters/181/5/287#183461](http://www.cmaj.ca/cgi/eletters/181/5/287#183461)

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## Correction

In the appendix to a Sept. 15 research article on home births,<sup>1</sup> the headings for the two columns on planned home births had been reversed. The revised appendix is available at [www.cmaj.ca/cgi/content/full/cmaj.081869/DC2](http://www.cmaj.ca/cgi/content/full/cmaj.081869/DC2).

#### REFERENCE

1. Janssen PA, Saxell L, Page LA, et al. Outcomes of planned home birth with registered midwife versus planned hospital birth with midwife or physician. *CMAJ* 2009;181(6-7):377-83.

DOI:10.1503/cmaj.109-2030

## Correction

A News article "Ontario's law curbing the cost of generic drugs sparks changes," published online Aug. 4, incorrectly identified the executive director of the Canadian Pharmacists Association as being Jess Poston. The executive director is Jeff Poston. The same story also identifies the association's Blueprint for Pharmacy as a "draft" document when, in fact, it is the association's final version, not a draft.

#### REFERENCE

1. Silversides A. Ontario's law curbing the cost of generic drugs sparks changes for pharmacies and other Canadian buyers. *CMAJ* 2009; 181:E43-45.

DOI:10.1503/cmaj.109-2029

## Letters to the editor

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