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CMAJ headlines:
- ☐ Parent educational tools on pain relief help reduce babies' vaccination distress
- ☐ Effects of smoked marijuana on lung health unknown: more research is needed

Parent educational tools on pain relief help reduce babies' vaccination distress
Randomized controlled trial

Information provided to new parents in hospital about how to alleviate pain for their babies during vaccination resulted in more frequent use of pain interventions at future infant vaccinations, reports a study published in *CMAJ (Canadian Medical Association Journal)*.

"Managing pain in children starts in infancy, and we need parents to know and care about this issue," says Dr. Anna Taddio, professor, Leslie Dan Faculty of Pharmacy, University of Toronto, and senior associate scientist, The Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids), Toronto, Ontario.

Vaccinations are a common cause of pain for babies, but many parents are unaware of how to alleviate pain.

Researchers looked at what methods would increase parental awareness and adoption of pain-relief strategies through hospital prenatal programs at Mount Sinai Hospital in Toronto. They involved parents in creating communications tools, including a pamphlet and video, to educate parents about different options to reduce pain, including breastfeeding, sugar syrup and topical anesthetic. Parents on the mother-baby unit at Mount Sinai Hospital received one of three interventions: immunization pamphlet, immunization pamphlet plus pain relief pamphlet, or the previous tools plus a video. At 2-, 4- and 6-month infant vaccinations, the researchers found rates of pain relief strategy use to be 53%, 61% and 63%, respectively.

"Our study used the hospital setting but actively presented the pain education to new parents with verbal instructions to review it. This small difference in the method of education delivery resulted in a significant positive effect, albeit smaller than anticipated," writes Dr. Taddio with coauthors.

The findings contribute to those of other studies aiming to increase use of pain relief strategies for infant pain. The authors note that the study design did not allow them to assess whether the pain relief video could be as effective if used alone.

"We found that about one parent acts on the information for every 10 given the intervention (pamphlet or pamphlet plus video). From a public health perspective, this can have a big impact at the population level," says Dr. Taddio.

"We found increased use of pain interventions at future infant vaccinations, knowledge, skills and confidence in parents' abilities to manage infant pain," says Dr. Taddio. "The tools are portable, low-cost and can be available in a variety of educational formats and platforms, including in the community, online and on smartphones as well as through existing hospital-based parent education programs. We can do more to provide new parents with evidence-based health information."

The study was funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR).

"Effectiveness of a hospital-based postnatal parent education intervention about pain management during infant vaccination: a randomized controlled trial" is published October 22, 2018.

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Effects of smoked marijuana on lung health unknown: more research is needed

Despite the legalization of marijuana on October 17, the long-term effects of smoked cannabis on lung health are unknown and more research is needed, argue authors in a commentary in *CMAJ (Canadian Medical Association Journal)*.

"Whereas many view marijuana as a relatively safe drug, and the numerous health benefits and safety of marijuana, especially when used for medicinal purposes, are touted in various media, others have expressed concern that the overall health benefits of 'medical' marijuana have been overstated and the drug's harms understated, as was the case for tobacco cigarettes before 1964," write Drs. Wan Tan and Don Sin, Centre

for Heart Lung Innovation at the University of British Columbia and St. Paul's Hospital, Vancouver, BC.

Marijuana is quite similar to tobacco, except for tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), its active ingredient.

There is evidence of the effects of marijuana on lung health, but much of it is conflicting, with some types of research finding respiratory symptoms and increased risk of chronic bronchitis, but longer-term epidemiological and clinical studies finding less clear results.

The commentary authors call for more research into the effects of marijuana on lung health and the risk of lung cancer and chronic obstructive pulmonary disorder (COPD).

"It is essential that, with the legalization of marijuana, well-designed preclinical in vitro, animal and clinical human studies are conducted to address pressing gaps in knowledge. (…) With further research, the mysteries and myths behind marijuana can be resolved," the authors conclude.

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