LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Scope
Heart welcomes letters commenting on papers published in the journal in the previous six months. Topics not related to papers published earlier in the journal may be introduced as a letter: letters reporting original data may be sent for peer review.

Presentation
Letters should be:

- not more than 600 words and six references in length
- typed in double spacing (fax copies and paper copy only)
- signed by all authors.

They may contain short tables or a small figure. Please send a copy of your letter on disk. Full instructions for authors appear in the January 1997 issue of Heart (page 89).

Prospective relations between Helicobacter pylori infection, coronary heart disease and stroke in middle-aged men

Sin,—In our nested case-control study of Helicobacter pylori infection and coronary heart disease,1 based on the British Regional Heart Study cohort, men with pre-existing coronary heart disease were unintentionally under-represented among the controls selected (4% v. 21% expected). This problem has been documented in the Lancet2 in relation to a parallel study of the relation between homocysteine and stroke.3 However, the results of the study of H pylori and its associations with coronary heart disease and stroke are not materially affected by this under-representation. This is emphasised by the results presented in the paper showing that the odds ratio associated with H pylori infection for coronary heart disease was very similar if men with pre-existing disease were completely excluded. Our conclusion therefore remains unchanged.

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Probable right ventricular dysplasia and patent foramen ovale presenting with cyanosis and clubbing in a patient with characteristics of Noonan syndrome

Sin,—I report additional information on a case described by myself and Da Costa.1 The patient, who presented with cyanosis and clubbing, was described as having probable right ventricular dysplasia associated with patent foramen ovale. She also had characteristics of Noonan syndrome. Right ventricular endomyocardial biopsy specimens showed fibre hypertrophy, vacuolation, and degeneration with fine interstitial fibrosis; however, fatty infiltration was not seen. Despite the presence of one major criterion for diagnosis of right ventricular dysplasia (severe dilatation and reduced ejection fraction of the right ventricle without left ventricular impairment), and one minor criterion (T wave inversion, loss V1–V4 on ECG), there were insufficient criteria for definitive diagnosis of right ventricular dysplasia.2

The original report pointed out that the patchy nature of fat infiltration in the right ventricle can result in failure of endomyocardial biopsies to sample an area of fatty infiltration. Thus, the criteria used for diagnosis often prevent diagnosis during the patient’s life; they are later confirmed at post mortem examination to have right ventricular dysplasia.

Our patient had, since undergone right ventricular cardiomyoplasty with closure of the foramen ovale (by Professor Sir Magdi Yacoub) with clinical benefit. Transmural biopsies taken at that time from the left ventricle were normal. Right ventricular biopsies showed no fatty infiltration but extensive fibrous and fatty tissue (personal communication, Dr M Burke, consultant histopathologist, Mount Vernon Hospital, Middlesex). This additional information confirms that the patient satisfied the criteria for a diagnosis of right ventricular dysplasia.

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CORRECTIONS

Fludrocortisone in the treatment of hypotensive disorders in the elderly

RM Hussain, SJ McIntosh, J Lawson, RJ Kenny

Under “Interventions” in the abstract authors should have read: Fludrocortisone in daily doses of 100 μg (72%), 50 μg (27%), and 200 μg (one patient). Not as published.

Effects of increasing flow rate on aortic stenotic indices: evidence from percutaneous transvenous balloon dilatation of the mitral valve in patients with combined aortic and mitral stenosis

T-M Lee, S-F Su, M-F Chen, C-S Liu, Y-T Lee

Sheng-Fang Su’s name was misspelled in the article.

NOTICES

The 1997 Annual Conference of the British Cardiovascular Society will take place at G-MEX, Manchester from 20–22 May. For further information, please contact the British Cardiovascular Society, 9 Fitzroy Square, London W1P 9AH. Tel: (+44) 0171 383 3887; fax: (+44) 0171 388 0903; e-mail: bcs@rbh.nthames.nhs.uk or visit <http://www.bcs.rbh.nthames.nhs.uk> on the Internet.

Asian-Pacific Cardiovascular Update will be held from June 5–6 in Hong Kong. For further information, contact Professor JE Sanderson, Departments of Medicine, Prince of Wales Hospital, Chinese University of Hong Kong. (e-mail: jeasanderson@cuhk.edu.hk).