

PRÉCIS

A brief digest of the December issue

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In the December issue:

Perspectives

Disease definition Gluckman describes the difficulties in describing disease populations during our evolving understanding of diseases. (pp 1053–4)

Varicella Roderick, Ramanan and Finn look at the evidence for universal varicella vaccination in the UK. (pp 1051–2)

Leading articles

MMR Elliman and Bedford review the negative impact of poor MMR uptake on the campaign to eliminate measles. (pp 1055–7)

Chronic fatigue Crawley and Davey-Smith review the evidence for the heritability of chronic fatigue. (pp 1058–61)

Original research

Obesity When different definitions of the metabolic syndrome are used, strikingly different prevalences are found in the same population. (pp 1067–72)

Asthma and diabetes Structured interviews with young people in England reveal a number of difficulties in accessing medicines at school. (pp 1077–81)

Asthma In a questionnaire study of children from ethnic backgrounds in London, cultural perspectives had an impact on family understanding of asthma. (pp 1082–7)

Vitamin D deficiency Of 232 children of Eastern African origin attending an immigrant health clinic in Melbourne, Australia, 87% were vitamin D insufficient and 44% were vitamin D deficient. (pp 1088–93)

Child protection A systematic review of the literature presents conclusions around oral injuries, and notes that isolated torn frenulum is not pathognomic of abuse. (pp 1113–7)

Abdominal pain In a prospective study of 1411 young people aged 11 to 14, 22% developed abdominal pain at one year, which persisted to 4 years, with previous somatic symptom reporting being a predictor. (pp 1094–8)

Visual impairment Over the period 1984 to 1998 there has been a fall in visual impairment in the UK, particularly in children who were born very preterm. However, there remain multiple causes of visual impairment. (pp 1099–104)

Immunisation related pain In a randomised controlled trial of 113 infants receiving DPTaP-Hib aged 4 to 6 months, those immunised with a rapid injection and no prior aspiration had less pain than those immunised with a traditional slower technique, as assessed by pain scores and time spent crying. (pp 1105–8)

Isolated raised aminotransferases In a series of 72 infants investigated and followed because of raised isolated aminotransferases, no further causes were found after baseline investigation and most resolved spontaneously after a year. (pp 1109–112)

Varicella A BPSU survey of serious complications of chickenpox revealed a variety of complications in 0.82/100 000 children per year, mostly in previously healthy children. (pp 1062–6)

Pneumococcal carriage Of 232 well children aged 6 months to 5 years attending day care centres in London, 120 (51%) had pneumococcal carriage as determined by nasal swabs. (pp 1073–6)

Short report

Smoking cessation Of 418 parents attending a Children's hospital in Aberdeen, 27% were smokers, of whom 81% were considering giving up smoking. (pp 1118–9)