

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

This issue, the sixth of the *Journal of the Ambulatory Pediatric Association*, continues the *Journal's* publication of research into pediatric immunizations and immunization-related health services research. Ardythe Morrow and colleagues (Eastern Virginia Medical School) offer an erudite discussion of the effects of population definition on measured immunization rates, and editorial board member Paul Darden (Medical University of South Carolina) annotates this contribution. Luisa Franzini and colleagues (University of Texas School of Public Health and other Texas institutions) describe a study of reminder systems in urban pediatric practice and use a novel technique to characterize their cost-effectiveness. Michele Garrison and Dimitri Christakis (University of Washington) offer an interesting systematic review of treatments for infant colic, likely to engender controversy in the resulting recommendations. Carolyn Berry and colleagues (Institute for Health Policy, Northwestern University) describe a valiant effort to describe child development services in Medicaid managed care programs. Despite the hard work of the investigators in searching for good programs, the services described in these "model" programs leave much concern regarding whether they meet even basic standards of child development services. This work indicates the need to define child development services well and to advocate for better access to them. Nancy Kelly and Janet Groff (University of Texas, Houston) provide insight into barriers to use of poison control centers in a good piece of qualitative research. Chris Feudtner and colleagues (University of Washington) apply epidemiologic principles to determine the contribution of complex, usually multi-system, conditions to childhood death rates in Washington. Associate Editor Charles Homer and colleagues (Harvard Medical School) carried out a randomized controlled trial of a computer-based asthma intervention.

Continuing the *Journal's* interest in educational efforts, Ardis Olson and colleagues (Dartmouth Medical School and other institutions) describe the development of a coordinated national pediatric clerkship curriculum, and Rachel Moon and Benjamin Gitterman (Children's National Medical Center) remind us of the value of experiential teaching for residents by sending them on a shopping excursion. This issue concludes with 2 papers concerning telephone management in pediatric practice. The first, by Alison Kempe and colleagues (University of Colorado) considers how a multi-tiered after-hours call program affects patient referrals. Barbara Philipp and colleagues (Boston Medical Center) provide a helpful comparison of urban and suburban office phone calls.

In its issues so far, the *Journal* has described several important and successful educational interventions in pediatrics, providing more attention to this area of child health professional development than our colleague journals. Similarly, our attention to methodology in child health research will provide investigators with substantive guidance in variable choice and definition and strengthen consistency in general pediatric research. Other manuscripts published cover multiple areas of general pediatrics, including early childhood issues, reading, and adolescence, as well as key work in child health services research and child health policy. We look forward to your continuing support of the Association's *Journal*.

James M. Perrin, MD
Editor-in-Chief

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