Antipyretic Therapy

The article on antipyretic therapy was relevant and informative(l). However, the role of Mefenamic acid was omitted except for a passing mention along with Nimesulide. Mefenamic acid is widely seud by practising pediatricinas. It is an antipyretic, analgesic and antiprostaglandin anti-inflammatory drug. It is found to be highly effective in controlling high fever. Often a single dose is found beneficial which can be followed by paracetamol after six to eight hours. It is claimed to be safe in liver diseases and pregnancy. The contraindications are peptic ulcer and diarrheal diseases. The side effects are gastrointestinal upset and occasional hemolytic anemia, thrombocytopenia, bronchospasm and drowsiness(2). It is available as 50 mg syrup and 100 mg, 250 mg and 500 mg tablets. The dose is 6-7 mg/kg per dose of 20 mg/kg per day in 3 divided doses.

Regarding physical antipyresis, it is not concluded in the article whether to use iced water or tepid water for sponging. Some pediatricians use tepid water for external sponging to prevent vasoconstriction and give iced water to drink to lower the core temperature.

K.E. Elizabeth,
Department of Pediatrics,
Medical College,
Trivandrum 695 011.

REFERENCES

1. Rajeshwari K. Antipyretic therapy. Indian Pediatr 1997; 34: 407-413.
2. Philip J. Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs. *In:* Drug Formulary, 1st edn. Ed. Pillai AM. Thiruvananthapuram IMA Kerala State Branch, 1992; p 232.

Reply

The article was intended to apprise the pediatricians about the recommended drugs for antipyresis in children. Mefenamic acid, a fenamate belongs to the family of Non Steroidal Anti Inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDs), which are derivatives of N phenylanthranilic acid. By inhibiting cyclo-oxygenase, they have anti-inflammatory, antipyretic and analgesic properties. It has no therapeutic superiority over other NSAIDS and causes side effects such as diarrhea in 25% of patients. These drugs are not recommended for use in children and pregnant women(l). It is primarily indicated for analgesia in adults.

Regarding physical antipyresis, tepid water is indicated for sponging. Use of iced water for sponging though more effective, causes patient discomfort and increases core body temperature. Published clinical data demonstrating the use of iced water to drink to decrease core temperature are difficult to find.

K. **Rajeshwari,**
Department of Pediatrics,
Hidnu Rao Hospital,
Delhi 110 007.

REFERENCE

1. Insel PA. Analgesic-antipyretic and anti-inflammatory agents and drugs employed in the treatment of gout. *In:* Goodman and Gilman's-the Pharmacologic Basis of Therapeutics, 9th edn. Hardman JG, Limbard LE. New York, McGraw Hill, 1996; pp 635-636.
