 **Is there a link between obesity and childhood asthma?**


The observation that asthma and obesity tend to increase in parallel may indicate a potential link between these two conditions. A recent systematic review including 10 studies investigated this relationship, during adolescence. Eight of the 10 selected studies showed positive associations between overweight/obesity and asthma. The review demonstrates a strong evidence that obesity precedes, and is associated with, the persistence and intensity of symptoms of asthma. (*Obesity Reviews Epub 9<sup>th</sup> Apr, 2010. DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-789X.2010.00741.x*)

**COMMENT** While this study certainly provides additional incentive to prevent obesity, we need to actually study if reducing weight leads to improved outcomes in asthma.

 **Identifying children at low risk for bacterial conjunctivitis**

368 children aged 6 months to 17 years (median 3 years) with conjunctival erythema, eye discharge, or both were examined. Clinicians completed a checklist of signs and symptoms and collected a conjunctival swab for bacterial culture. Conjunctival cultures were negative in 130 patients (35.3%). Age 6 years or older, presentation in April through November, no or watery discharge, and no glued eye in the morning were found to be independently associated with a negative conjunctival culture. If 3 factors were present, 76.4% of patients had a negative culture. If all 4 factors were present, 92.3% of patients had a negative culture. Thus the combination of 4 clinical factors may enable clinicians to identify children at low risk for bacterial conjunctivitis and may reduce routine antibiotic drug administration. (*Arch Pediatr Adolesc Med 2010; 164; 263*)

**COMMENT** A very useful adjunct for pediatricians in office practice to decide whether an antibiotic eye drop is really necessary without needing to refer a patient to the Ophthalmologist.

 **Does breastfeeding matter for IQ, brain size, and white matter development?**

The authors used detailed data from a randomized feeding trial to calculate percentage of expressed maternal breast milk (%EBM) in the infant diet of 50 adolescents. MRI scans were obtained (mean age = 15 y 9 mo), allowing volumes of total brain (TBV) and white and gray matter (WMV, GMV) to be calculated. In the total group, %EBM correlated significantly with verbal intelligence quotient (VIQ); in boys, with all IQ scores, TBV and WMV. VIQ was, in turn, correlated with WMV and, in boys only, additionally with TBV. No significant relationships were seen in girls or with gray matter. These data support the hypothesis that breastmilk promotes brain development, particularly white matter growth (*Pediatr Res. 2009 Dec 22*).

 **Does homeopathic treatment help in recurrent URTI?**

The number of attacks of the URTIs during the 6 months period preceding the date of commencement of the homeopathic treatment and 6 months period following the date of commencement of treatment were compared in 30 children. The results of the study indicated statistically significant differences ( $P < 0.001$ ) in the two data sets in favor of homeopathic treated cases. The results of the study indicate the utility of the homeopathic remedies in the treatment of URTIs in children. (*Complementary Therapies in Clinical Practice 2010, 16: 101*).

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