lined in my article, together with ethical and medicolegal considerations, favoured a blanket policy of avoiding their conjoint use. Several other large allergy clinics in Ontario have adopted the same policy. The CSACI recently approved a resolution on the risks of asthma and anaphylaxis during β-blocker therapy.[4] In part the resolution stated that "physicians should be informed of the potential increased risk of the simultaneous use of beta-blockers in any form with allergen injection treatment, and allergy skin tests in patients with or without asthma".

The policy advocated in my article does not carry any official sanction. It represents my view, albeit one shared by many clinical allergists. Each practitioner remains free to make a decision on the basis of the available facts. My article was intended to facilitate this process by summarizing these facts for them.

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Retrieving impacted cannabis resin with ear drops

When a somewhat inebriated woman was stopped by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police she thought that the best place for hiding a small piece of cannabis resin was an auditory meatus. After evading detection by the police the offending item evaded retrieval by the woman, so her only trip that night was to a hospital.

Syringing and attempts to catch the piece of resin with pincers failed. The woman was advised to soften the resin with Cerumol (paradichlorobenzene-chlorbutol compound) and return in a few days. She used the drops for a few days but returned to the hospital 2 weeks later because a small residual piece of the resin was causing irritation. The piece came out easily with syringing.

The patient then observed that the piece of resin was in such a condition that it could not serve any further purpose. It was disposed of down the sink drain.

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Survey of parents' attitudes to the recommended *Haemophilus influenzae* type b vaccine program

I have noted with interest the article by Shawn and Gold (*Can Med Assoc J* 1987; 136: 1038-1040) on parents' attitudes toward the recommended *Haemophilus influenzae* type b vaccine program and another by Shawn and associates[1] on physicians' attitudes.

These articles seem to say that this vaccine is a good thing and question why parents and physicians across Canada do not recommend it.

I am one of the physicians who believes that this is nothing more than a vaccine looking for an indication. I am particularly suspicious because I first heard about it from the manufacturer.

The vaccine is ineffective in children under 2 years of age, yet 70% of the cases caused by *H. influenzae* occur in that age group. Further indications for giving this vaccine up to the age of 5 years have been touted; however, evidence for its efficacy in this group seems to be scanty.

It seems we have two issues: a vaccine that would be a good idea if, indeed, it was hitting the target group, and the interest in the medical community, justified as it may be, in eradicating this well-known killer of children through such disorders as meningitis. As it now stands, I cannot see that this vaccine, given to children 2 years of age or older, is ideal at all and have not been recommending it to my patients.

I have heard rumours that in the next 2 years or so there will be a version of this vaccine available to be given at 2, 4 and 6 months of age. At that time my attitude and that of other physicians may change.

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[Dr. J. Michael Dixon, chairman of the National Advisory Committee on Immunization, responds:]

Dr. Stephenson condemns the currently licensed *H. influenzae* type b vaccine because it is capable of protecting only about one-third of the children who will contract *H. influenzae* meningitis. The best estimate currently available is that up to 1000 cases of this disease occur in Canada annually, the mortality rate being 5%.[1] Consequently, given a vaccine efficacy rate of about 85%, up to 280 children could be protected each year by vaccination against this life-threatening infection. Furthermore, protection is afforded against other serious invasive diseases, such as epiglottitis. Many cases of severe disease