



MEDIA ADVISORY

For immediate release

May 8, 2003

Experts from B.C.'s Children's Hospital and B.C. Research Institute for Children's & Women's Health Headline Child & Youth Health Congress, May 11-14, 2003

The following experts from Children's & Women's Health Centre of B.C. are available to the media during the Congress:

Stress of Immigration

Dr. Robert Armstrong

Every year, 55,000 children under the age of 15 settle in Canada as immigrants or refugees. Dr. Armstrong is one of the leaders in a national study aimed at understanding the link between the stresses of migration and the health status of immigrant and refugee children. The new Canadian Children & Youth Study involves interviewing over 4,000 families in six cities across the country.

Dr. Robert Armstrong is Chief, Pediatric Medicine at Children's and Women's Health Centre of British Columbia.

Drug Safety

Dr. Bruce Carleton

The health system relies on a voluntary surveillance system to track the safety of approved medications once they are tested and approved for use by government. Over time, this data helps inform doctors which drugs can cause significant adverse reactions and how best to use them in treatment.

Information regarding adverse reactions to drugs is scarce, particularly adverse drug reactions and children. According to government regulations, less than 25 per cent of drugs marketed in North America can be described as safe and effective for use in infants and children. New ways to address the old problem of drug safety in children must be carefully considered.

Dr. Carleton is currently the Director of Pharmaceutical Outcomes Research at British Columbia's Children's Hospital. He is also Associate Professor, Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences at the University of British Columbia. He is also Chair, Division of Clinical Pharmacy in this faculty and on the Board of Directors for the Pediatric Pharmacy Advocacy Group (PPAG) Research Committee.

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HIV/AIDS

Dr. Jack Forbes/Dr. Catherine Wilfert

Perinatal HIV Disease: The most significant success in the campaign against HIV transmission has been a greater than ten-fold decrease through the use of antiretroviral therapy in mother and child. This session will discuss the prophylactic perinatal regimens available, discuss long-term effects on exposed infants and describe current efforts to make perinatal therapy available to women and children in the developing world.

Youth and HIV: In North America, a teenager is estimated to be infected every hour. Youth can be difficult to reach, and this session will highlight the Youth Community Outreach (Youth CO) non-profit organization run by and for youth, providing outreach, education and support for youth infected and affected by HIV/AIDS. The aim of this session is to discuss successful programs designed by youth for vulnerable youth and HIV infected youth living in Canada.

Dr. Forbes is the Co-Director of the Oak Tree Clinic at Children's, a multidisciplinary investigation and treatment centre for women and children with HIV. It offers medical, psychosocial care and support for the family, full access to new therapies, outreach, education and health promotion.

Dr. Catherine Wilfert is a Professor of Pediatrics and Microbiology at Duke University Medical Center, Chapel Hill, USA, and Scientific Director, Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation. She is working on mother to child transmission prevention programs in Africa and Asia.

Drug Cost Effectiveness

Dr. Stuart MacLeod

A study released on April 28, 2003 concludes that some drugs are dispensed to children without appropriate research into their effects on children, and without adequate regulatory supervision or assistance.

Dr. MacLeod is the Executive Director of the BC Research Institute for Children's & Women's Health. He has 30 years experience as a pediatric clinical pharmacologist. He is a longstanding advocate for the amelioration of drug therapy for children and the principal author of the statement, *Drug investigation for Canadian children: the role of the Canadian Paediatric Society*.

Pain in Child Health: Can New Knowledge Change Practice? Dr. Tim Oberlander

Dr. Oberlander is researching the interaction between experience and behaviour and how this relates to subsequent biologic and behavioural function during childhood. This integrative approach to biobehavioural development extends from genetic levels to entire neural systems and includes functional outcomes that reflect both basic process and the environmental context in which the child lives.

Dr. Oberlander works at the Centre for Community Child Health Research (UBC) at the B.C. Research Institute for Children's & Women's Health. He is an Associate Professor, Department of Pediatrics, University of British Columbia as well as a Developmental Pediatrician, Children's & Women's Health Centre of B.C. (C&W) and attending physician with the Complex Pain Service at C&W.

Hepatitis A in Young Adults

Dr. David Scheifele

Dr. Scheifele is leading a new study on hepatitis A in young adults. Its novel method of gathering data involves a cotton swab and a small canister mailed out to 2,500 people throughout B.C. Participants are asked to hold the swab in their mouths for a minute, then replace it in the canister and mail it back to the Institute. This method gives researchers access to all corners of the province. The results will inform policy on Hepatitis A vaccinations.

Dr. David Scheifele is Director of the Vaccine Evaluation Centre at the B.C. Research Institute for Children's & Women's Health. He is available for interviews on May 15th.

New Techniques of *in utero* Treatment

Dr. Erik Skarsgard

Current techniques of prenatal diagnosis allow many fetal birth defects to be accurately diagnosed. For fetuses with a defect of body structure, minimally invasive fetal surgery may be more effective than corrective surgery done after birth. And for fetuses diagnosed with an absent or defective gene, *in utero* gene replacement offers the possibility of preventing many such genetic diseases.

Dr. Erik Skarsgard is a pediatric surgeon and researcher working on new techniques of *in utero* treatment to halt the progress of genetic diseases, and to improve the chances of survival for fetuses with life-threatening birth defects.

ADHD in Adolescents

Dr. Margaret D. Weiss

Research into treatment of ADHD in adolescence lags far behind that of ADHD in childhood. Individuals with ADHD often remain symptomatic and experience considerable educational difficulty, social impairment, and poor self-esteem in adolescence. ADHD in adolescents is treatable. Clinical experience and empirical research have improved our knowledge of how to better respond to the needs of these youth.

Dr. Weiss is Child Psychiatrist and Director, ADHD Clinic, Department of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, B.C.'s Children's Hospital and Clinical Associate Professor and Director of Research, Division of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry at the University of British Columbia. Her current research areas are ADHD in children, adolescents and adults; and psychopharmacology and medication treatment for ADHD.

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