
Decline in Mortality with Varicella Vaccination

TO THE EDITOR: Nguyen et al. (Feb. 3 issue) report on the effect of the U.S. varicella vaccination program on disease-related mortality. The effectiveness of such programs also includes reducing severe varicella-associated complications. In Italy, from 1995 to 2003, when no universal childhood varicella vaccination program was in effect, we documented 303 admissions (median age of patients, 4.2 years; range, 0 to 15) to a children’s research hospital for varicella for a total of 2420 days of hospitalization. Thirty-nine patients (13 percent) had varicella-associated complications (1.2 percent of admissions for varicella), including 13 with central nervous system involvement and 7 with severe bacterial superinfections. No patient died, but stroke occurred in four children (age range, 6 months to 6 years) (Fig. 1), with hemiparesis, facial paralysis, or both 2 to 30 days after the onset of exanthema, as previously described. All four patients had severe sequelae. Universal varicella vaccination not only reduces mortality but also provides an effective means of limiting severe and incapacitating disease-related complications.

Raffaella Giacchino, M.D.
Giuseppe Losurdo, M.D.
Elio Castagnola, M.D.
G. Gaslini Children’s Hospital
16147 Genoa, Italy
raffaella.giacchino@ospedale-gaslini.ge.it


Nucleophosmin in Acute Myelogenous Leukemia

TO THE EDITOR: Falini et al. (Jan. 20 issue) report an abnormal cytoplasmic localization of nucleophosmin (NPM) in 35 percent of specimens from patients with acute myelogenous leukemia. In these patients the NPM gene was mutated, which resulted in a frame shift. The authors state that tryptophan residues at positions 288 and 290 of NPM played a role in the cytoplasmic translocation of NPM. However, these residues are responsible only for nucleolar localization of NPM, not for cytoplasmic localization. We found a motif containing leucine-valine residues, known as the nuclear-export-signal (NES) motif, in the C-terminal of mutated NPMs A to F in Figure 4B of the article (Fig. 1, next page).