

What does the CPSP have to do with public health?

The busy paediatrician takes a few minutes from his day to complete the Canadian Paediatric Surveillance Program (CPSP) check-off form. He prides himself on his diligent monthly response, knowing that the simple act of faithfully returning the form provides valuable scientific data to guide public health policy decisions. Furthermore, he understands the importance of being part of the 2400 CPSP participants that 'make a difference' as an indicator of the degree of

'active reporting'. The monthly returns coupled with the detailed case questionnaires provide investigators with valuable Canadian data, often unavailable from other sources, allowing for meaningful analyses and interpretation. The CPSP is a pan-Canadian, purposeful, economical and action-oriented program that influences clinical practice and health-care delivery for the benefit of all children and their families.

LEARNING POINTS

Since its inception in 1996, CPSP studies have provided scientific evidence to support the following public health actions:

Advocating effective universal immunization

- Two-dose measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) immunization strategy to prevent rubella infection and congenital rubella syndrome, as well as measles infection and subacute sclerosing panencephalitis.
- Polio immunization to ensure that Canada remains polio-free, as wild poliovirus was documented in Canada as recently as 1996, and the threat of re-emergence still exists.
- Varicella immunization to decrease group A beta-hemolytic streptococcal-related necrotizing fasciitis, a documented complication of varicella.

Confirmation of medical guidelines

- Intramuscular vitamin K administration at birth as the gold standard for virtually eliminating hemorrhagic disease of the newborn.

- Vitamin D dietary supplementation for all breastfed newborns to prevent nutritional rickets.
- Conservative fluid management of patients with diabetic ketoacidosis to reduce the risk of cerebral edema.
- Evaluation within 48 h of early discharge of all term newborns for timely detection of neonatal hyperbilirubinemia and prevention of kernicterus.

Advocating healthy public policy and adequate product safety standards

- High standards of food and water inspection as well as proper food preparation and cooking to avoid hemolytic uremic syndrome and related long-term renal complications.
- Mandatory ban of baby walkers to prevent needless injuries.
- Development and mandatory use of weight/size-appropriate car restraints and booster seats to reduce lap-belt syndrome injuries.

The Canadian Paediatric Surveillance Program (CPSP) is a joint project of the Canadian Paediatric Society and Health Canada's Centre for Infectious Disease Prevention and Control that undertakes the surveillance of rare diseases and conditions in children. For more information visit our Web site at <www.cps.ca/english/cpsp> or <www.cps.ca/francais/pcsps>.