

lescent children have access to weapons. In these cases, physicians should at least suggest that patients get rid of the weapons or store them safely. General practitioners, pediatricians and psychiatrists should be especially aware of the danger of keeping firearms, since accidents and deaths occur mainly among their clientele.

These actions on the part of individual physicians and physicians' organizations would form the medical profession's contribution to firearm safety and to reduction of gun-related accidents and deaths in Canada.

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CONFUSION OF DRUG NAMES SIGNALLED

I wish to call attention to the possible confusion of similar names of yet another pair of medications. In a recent case, a man 80 years of age with Parkinson's disease was admitted to hospital with worsening bradykinesia one day after insertion of a pacemaker for symptomatic bradycardia. The patient was taking levodopa-carbidopa (Sinemet),

bromocriptine (Parlodel) and midodrine (Amatine). Midodrine is a postsynaptic α -adrenergic receptor stimulant. Its main effect is elevation of blood pressure, but it may also cause a marked reflex bradycardia.

When the patient was being evaluated for symptomatic bradycardia, before insertion of the pacemaker, it may have been thought that he was taking amantadine (Symmetrel), which is used for prevention and treatment of type A influenza, instead of Amatine. Since hypotension may result from therapy with levodopa-carbidopa or with bromocriptine, it is important to establish whether a patient with Parkinson's disease has been prescribed amantadine or midodrine (Amatine).

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TRAUMA KITS ON TRAINS LACK EQUIPMENT

As members of the travelling public, physicians are often asked to help with medical emergencies on board airplanes. A special report in *CMAJ* ("Care in the air: Quality of airline medical kits varies widely," *Can Med Assoc J* 1989; 140: 197-201, by Anne Gilmore) discussed the status of physician kits carried by the main airlines. Today, most airlines carry a comprehensive kit that allows physicians to provide emergency care. These kits include a stethoscope, a blood-pressure cuff, airways, a positive-pressure bag and mask, an oxygen source and several drugs for advanced cardiac life support.

However, if a physician was called upon to help a patient on board Canada's passenger trains, very little equipment would be offered to aid him or her.



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