BECLOMETHASONE DIPROPIONATE AEROSOL IN CHILDHOOD ASTHMA: A THREE- TO FIVE-YEAR FOLLOW-UP

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A group of 19 children (12 boys and 7 girls) with severe chronic perennial asthma were followed up during 3.0–5.3 yr of treatment with beclomethasone dipropionate aerosol (BDA). The children first took BDA at a mean age of 7.7 yr (range 4.9–11.9 yr), and all are still taking it except for three whose asthma has improved and who are now on intermittent treatment with bronchodilators.

Comparing the time before introduction of BDA with the duration of this treatment, the number of hospital admissions were similar, but the need for oral

corticosteroids was much reduced. Three-quarters of the children, however, required 1–2 weeks of oral corticosteroid therapy per year while receiving BDA, to prevent exacerbations of asthma. There was no adrenal or growth suppression, but neither was there any growth acceleration. Infection with *Candida albicans* was not a problem.

In a larger group of children taking BDA, failure of control by this drug has been seen for periods of up to 2.7 yr in about 14%, but in all cases the asthma has eventually been controlled by BDA.