Adult congenital heart disease

G Webb. Improving the care of Canadian adults with congenital heart disease. *Can J Cardiol* 2005;21:833-8.

To the Editor:

Dr Gary Webb has candidly championed the current pressing needs of the adult with congenital heart disease (CHD), diplomatically deploring the inertia of the Canadian cardiovascular community. We are also emphatically reminded that CHD is now as much an adult issue as it is a pediatric one. Three personal notations: first, the importance of providing adequate care for adults, and the plea for an integration of a pediatric and adult cardiovascular continuum of interest, and of stewardship, was well documented at the Canadian Cardiovascular Society meetings in Calgary in 2004; however, the messages were simply echoes of prior informal dialogue at seminars in the United States (American College of Cardiology, Anaheim 1997) and Europe (European Society of Cardiology, Barcelona 1999).

Second, the California CHD exposure piqued this observer's research into the electrocardiography (ECG) of CHD, and with the mentorship contributions, dutifully acknowledged, of Dr Webb (and Dr Robert Freedom), singular ECG signatures of six common congenital cardiac disease states have been recorded; atrial septal defect (1); hypertrophic cardiomyopathy (2); mitral valve prolapse (2); coronary artery anomalies (2-4); long QT syndrome (2,5); and dextrocardia (6).

Finally, in May 1999, the undersigned volunteered to interpret CHD ECGs in the north. The response was perhaps ominously prophetic, "I'd be delighted to have you read our northern ECGs. Regrettably, we don't have any".

The explanation was that the network was in the process of trying to get Ministry funding for a provincial care plan enabling better involvement of physicians and patients from northern Ontario. The rest is history. Dr Webb's Canadian support has not been fully realized but, thankfully, adult patients with CHD in Europe, and now in all of the Americas, have a perpetual champion relevant to 'cradle-to-grave' interest.

*John AM Morphet MD FRCPC FACC FESC
Department of Medicine, McMaster University,
Hamilton, Ontario*

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