Table 1 Percentage response by general practitioners for each antibiotic for 1983-84 and 1984-85

Question and year of Survey	Antibiotic prescribed						
	Co-trimoxazole	Trimethoprim	Ampicillin	Amoxycillin	Nitrofurantoin	Cephalosporin	Other
1a 83/4	27.3	42.0	9.1	4.5	8.0	1.1	8.0
84/5	4.17	73.6	2.78	4.17	6.94	1.39	6.94
1b 83/4	36.4	42.0	0	0	9.1	1.1	11.4
84/5	6.94	75.0	0	0	9.72	4.17	4.17
1c 83/4	1.1	5.7	27.3	20.4	23.9	5.7	15.9
84/5	0	16.9	18.3	23.9	23.9	8.45	8.45
2 83/4	2.35	3.5	41.2	27.1	17.6	3.5	4.71
84/5	0	5.63	38.0	31.0	15.5	5.63	4.22
3 83/4	28.7	29.9	12.6	9.2	12.6	3.45	3.34
84/5	12.9	51.4	7.14	7.14	10.0	5.71	5.71
4 83/4	22.6	28.6	1.2	2.4	27.4	2.4	15.5
84/5	11.8	50.0	2.94	0	27.9	0	7.35

of the questionnaire was as follows:

1 20 year old female patient with cystitis who has:

- a) no known allergies
- b) allergy to the penicillins
- c) allergy to septrin.

3 Catheterised patient in whom you suspect that symptoms of fever and malaise are related to urinary tract infection.

4 A patient presents with a history of repeated urinary tract infection and you decide to use antibiotics prophylactically.

Table 1 shows the responses to the questionnaire.

About 20% of urines from patients seen by a general practitioner contain antimicrobial substances on arrival in the laboratory.¹⁻⁴ Using a method developed in this laboratory, the identity of antibiotics present in the urine was ascertained. Although it is appreciated that some of these urines may have contained antibiotics as a result of patients using antibiotics prescribed for earlier or unrelated conditions,⁵ we nevertheless felt that the specimens would provide a useful guide to the antibiotics currently in use. Table 2 shows the results of the laboratory tests.

The response to the questionnaire circulated at the beginning of the survey suggested that 50.7% of the local general practitioners were already using antibiotics as recommended by the laboratory. Forty four per cent of urines were found to contain antibiotics consistent with the reporting policy by the identification test. Twelve months

later the results of the questionnaire and the identification test were 68%, and 67%, respectively.

Although there is currently a national trend away from the use of co-trimoxazole towards trimethoprim alone,⁶ which may account for some of the decline in the use of co-trimoxazole as indicated by both questionnaire and laboratory test, we feel that these results support the hypothesis that reporting a limited range of antimicrobial agents did and continues to influence the prescribing habits of general practitioners in the Leeds area.

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Lymphocyte recovery rate using H6000

We note the comments of Markey *et al* on our findings and would like to point out that our lymphocyte recovery rate is based on the absolute lymphocyte count of recovered cells, using the H6000. This instrument differentiates lymphocytes from monocytes by peroxidase staining, and a low monocyte count does not, therefore, lead to an overestimation of lymphocyte recovery. LUC denotes large unstained cells—that is, primitive "blast" cells—and activated lymphocytes. The increase in LUC, after separation is likely to be due to increased concentration of these cells, as monocytes, which are peroxidase positive, do not appear in the LUC fraction.

Preliminary studies of cytopsin preparations of cells recovered by our modified "buffy coat" method, using Leishmann and non-specific esterase staining techniques suggest that a monocyte contamination of around 16% results, tending to confirm the H6000 results. We would suggest that our relatively low monocyte contamination is due to adherence of these cells to plastic ware during separation procedures.

The modified buffy coat method has improved our lymphocyte yields, and the cells recovered survive and respond well to mitogens such as Pokeweed in tissue culture. Viability at the end of two weeks in continuous culture is 60% or more.

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Table 2 Percentage of total urine specimens containing antibiotics for 1983-4 and 1984-5

	Trimethoprim	Co-trimoxazole	Ampicillin	Amoxicillin	Cephalosporin	Sulph	Others
1983/4	17.7	28.8	10.3	0.7	5.2	11.1	26.2
1984/5	57.0	2.8	2.8	9.9	7.1	0.0	20.4