



Thomas C. Meyer, MD

## Editorial

# Fullerenes, carbon nanotubes, quantum dots, and more...

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We received a lengthy manuscript about 6 weeks ago with a very polite note asking whether the *Wisconsin Medical Journal* would be interested in publishing it. We were fascinated. A whole new world was opening up: the world of fullerenes, nanotubes, “buckyballs,” and the like. Our heads were spinning with this new lexicon and we asked the authors whether they would consider splitting the article so that we could digest the overall concepts in 1 issue and review them briefly before getting into the further details in the next issue. Drs Powell and Kanarek were kind enough to do this and have provided a primer in nanotechnologies and some of the theoretical as well as laboratory-based observations on the biological effects of the ultrafine particles that may enter into clinical medicine in the not-too-distant future (p 16).

Doctors Anderson and Islam’s update on the current status of adult lead exposure gives some reason for satisfaction with the progress made to date, but there is a way to go if the 2010 goal is to be met. Industrial lead poisoning seems relatively well controlled, but small construction and homeowner renovation and hobbies using lead are becoming more common (p 21). The same authors point out that currently there is no national program to track and study the epidemiology of occupational injuries, illnesses, and hazards despite the enormous annual cost of these

maladies. They report on the results of an early effort to track 5 of 19 occupational health indicators (p 26).

Dr Malecki and her colleagues outline the painstaking requirements for tracking the possible relationship between chemical contaminants and childhood cancer along with some preliminary results (p 32). Dr Bekkedal et al evaluated 5 datasets by which a surveillance system for environmental hazards—in this case carbon monoxide—could be established (p 36). Some of the datasets were better than others, but the astute clinician remains the cornerstone of the program, with diagnosis and reporting being essential. Ms Gliori et al report on the not very successful attempt by the Department of Health and Family Services to raise the awareness of pregnant women to the prenatal effects of high methylmercury in fish caught in Wisconsin lakes and rivers. They conclude with suggestions as to how future campaigns may be more successful (p 41).

Doctor Trasande and his colleagues surveyed pediatricians in Wisconsin concerning their perceptions of their own efficacy in dealing with environmental exposures and their attitudes towards the role of the environment in children’s health. There was general agreement on several issues: the environment is important, the pediatricians felt confident in dealing with lead exposure but not pesticide, mercury, or mold exposure counseling and management. Very few were aware of the regional

Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Unit located in Chicago (p 45). In the next article, Dr Trasande provides an outline of the National Children’s Study—a multi-year epidemiological study (along the lines of the Framingham Heart Study) that is being developed and scheduled to commence in 2007 with a representative cohort of 100,000 children who will be followed through age 21 years. Environmental risk factors for chronic disease in children will be the primary focus of the study (p 50). Dr Hewitt et al (p 55) and Dr McElroy et al (p 59) expand on Dr Trasande’s outline and detail some of the plans for the Waukesha county “Vanguard Center” where the Wisconsin initiative will be centered.

Doctors Mazzone and Woolever’s case report (p 64) is that of uterine rupture in an unscarred uterus along with a very useful review of the risk factors, signs and symptoms, differential diagnosis, management, and counseling after a rupture.

Finally, we are introducing a non-peer reviewed feature entitled “As I See It” (p 9). During recent months we have received several interesting medically-related manuscripts that don’t fit well into our current format. Some are clinical observations, some socioeconomic, some general ruminations. All are interesting in their own way. We plan to publish them on a space-available basis and will be interested to hear whether they are of interest to you.

# Wisconsin Medical Journal

The mission of the *Wisconsin Medical Journal* is to provide a vehicle for professional communication and continuing education of Wisconsin physicians.

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