to a shortened hospital stay in the two centres most familiar with the techniques.

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Systemic *Haemophilus influenzae* and facial cellulitis in infants

Haemophilus influenzae is a well-recognised cause of serious infections, common manifestations including meningitis, epiglottitis, and pneumonia.¹ Facial cellulitis is an uncommon but characteristic presentation,^{2,3} but has not been described from Britain. Its early clinical recognition is especially important because of associated bacteraemia. We describe four such cases seen within nine months in Cardiff.

Appearances of facial cellulitis.

Patients, methods, and results

Three boys and one girl aged 7-9 months presented with swelling of the cheek for periods ranging from six to 48 hours. All had been in good health, although one had been treated for otitis media two weeks before. On examination they looked toxic and had high temperatures of 39-40°C. In all cases the affected cheek was grossly swollen, indurated, and bluish. Three had an associated otitis media. Investigations disclosed a polymorph leucocytosis,

and *H influenzae* was subsequently isolated on blood cultures in each case. All were treated with parenteral ampicillin and made a satisfactory recovery.

Comment

Facial cellulitis has characteristic features and usually occurs in very young children. The swelling develops within hours, has a bluish hue, and is accompanied by a brisk fever and leucocytosis. Blood cultures show an associated bacteraemia. Recognising the clinically characteristic pattern is important if possible complications of the bacteraemia are to be prevented.⁴

It is difficult to explain why this infection should localise in the cheek. In our patients the cellulitis was not related to the parotid gland or duct, and no oral lesion was seen. Alternatives to local infection are lymphatic⁵ or haematogenous spread, but we found no common features in these four children to suggest these. We subsequently saw a 10-month-old infant with *H influenzae* cellulitis at the right elbow and left ankle: simultaneous infection in these two sites must have occurred by the haematogenous route.

The absence of other British reports suggests that the condition may have escaped notice in the past or may be evidence of changing virulence of *H influenzae*. It will be interesting to see if further cases will be reported.

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Requests for reprints should be sent to Dr J F Murphy.

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BEANS. Both the garden and field beans are so well known, that it saves me the labour of writing any description of them. The virtues follow.

They are plants of Venus, and the distilled water of the flower of garden beans is good to clean the face and skin from spots and wrinkles, and the meal or flour of them, or the small beans doth the same. The water distilled from the green husk, is held to be very effectual against the stone, and to provoke urine. Bean flour is used in poultices to assuage inflammations arising from wounds, and the swelling of women's breasts caused by the curdling of their milk, and represses their milk; Flour of beans and Fenugreek mixed with honey, and applied to felons, boils, bruises, or blue marks by blows, or the imposthumes in the kernels of the ears, helps them all, and with Rose leaves, Frankincense and the white of an egg, being applied to the eyes, helps them that are swollen or do water, or have received any blow upon them, if used with wine. If a bean be parted in two, the skin being taken away, and laid on the place where the leech hath been set that bleeds too much, stays the bleeding. Bean flour boiled to a poultice with wine and vinegar, and some oil put thereto, eases both pains and swelling of the privities. The husk boiled in water to the consumption of a third part thereof, stays a lask; and the ashes of the husks, made up with old hog's grease, helps the old pains, contusions, and wounds of the sinews, the sciatica and gout. The field beans have all the aforementioned virtues as the garden beans.

Beans eaten are extremely windy meat; but if after the Dutch fashion, when they are half boiled you husk them and then stew them (I cannot tell you how, for I never was a cook in all my life) they are wholesome food. (Nicholas Culpeper (1616-54) *The Complete Herbal*, 1850.)