Living with cerebral palsy and tube feeding

To the Editor:
Smith et al. state that their survival results are similar to those of Strauss et al. but different from those of Eyman et al. A closer look at the findings of studies concerned with tube feeding and mobility reveals similar results rather than differences in median years of survival. Strauss et al. found a median survival of 5.7 years for tube-fed children who had no mobility and a median survival of 9 years for children who were tube fed but had some mobility. Their later study indicates a median survival of 7 more years for children with cerebral palsy who were tube fed and had no mobility and a median survival of 12 years for children with head lift. Eyman et al. reported a median survival of 4.8 years for children with no mobility who required tube feeding and 11 more years for tube-fed children who had limited mobility (partial rolling). All studies are in agreement that once tube-fed children can sit independently and move about, the prognosis improves dramatically. Differences in median estimates among these studies are trivial in our view. We believe that mobility or voluntary movement is critical in the presence of tube feeding.

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935/107629
dei:10.1067/ped.2001.107629

Regarding autism

To the Editor:
I would like to compliment Drs Accardo and Bostwick on their excellent editorial regarding autism. However, I must take issue with their un-referenced statement: "... it is becoming an accepted general rule among parents and professionals other than pediatricians that diagnosis by age 2 years is needed to ensure optimal outcome." Two recent reviews of autism report an onset of symptoms at ages ranging from 18 to 30 months. I interpret this to mean that some children with autism may appear to be developing in a normal fashion at 2 years of age. Thus the above statement of Drs Accardo and Bostwick has the potential, in a legal arena, to impute delayed diagnosis with subsequent poor developmental result when, in fact, the characteristics of autism may not have been present at age 2.

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935/108206
dei:10.1067/ped.2001.108206

REFERENCES

Reply
To the Editor:
"First... all the Lawyers."
Shakespeare, Henry VI Part 2, 4.2.86

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