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Haemoglobin O Arab (B121 Glu-Lys) in Turkish Cypriot population

SIR,

Hb O Arab (B121 Glu-Lys) has been reported in different ethnic groups including Sudanese, Arabs, American Negroes, Bulgarians, and recently in Turkish people.^{1–7} It has not previously been reported in the Turkish Cypriot population.

We investigated blood samples of 1365 apparently healthy Turkish Cypriots by cellulose acetate electrophoresis.⁸ When an abnormal haemoglobin was identified, citrate agar electrophoresis was performed.⁹ Structural analysis was performed when indicated.¹⁰

Two haemoglobin O Arab traits and one Hb O Arab β -thalassaemia combination were detected in three different families. Further study of 24 subjects from these three families revealed 13 Hb O Arab traits and two Hb O Arab β -thalassaemia combinations. It was observed that the subjects with Hb O Arab had negroid characteristics (negroid Turkish Cypriots have the same physical characteristics as African Negroes; they represent less than 1% of all Turkish Cypriots). We investigated a further 19 subjects with negroid characteristics, two with Hb S trait, one with Hb H disease, and five with β -thalassaemia trait, but no further Hb O Arab traits were found in these subjects.

Hb O Arab was first detected in an Arab living in Israel, then in Egypt, Aden, Bulgaria, Rumania, Hungary, among American Negroes, and recently in Turkey.^{1–7} It is believed to have originated in the Sudan and to have spread from there to West Africa and to many countries once occupied by or in close contact with the Ottoman Empire.^{6, 7}

When the history of the Ottoman Empire is considered the occurrence of Hb O Arab in Cyprus is not surprising. In 1570 the Ottomans conquered Cyprus and Anatolian Turks migrated to the island. The island was ruled by the Ottomans from the 16th to the end of the 19th century and during this period many people from Sudan and Egypt emigrated to Anatolia, Syria, Lebanon, and Cyprus.¹¹ Identification of Hb O Arab in Turkish Cypriots may indicate an admixture of African blood in the past.

Moreover, some Turkish Cypriots show negroid physical characteristics.

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Incidence of pyloric stenosis in British Columbia over a 12 year period

SIR,

In a recent letter, Carter and co-workers¹ mentioned that the incidence of pyloric stenosis (infantile hypertrophic pyloric stenosis, IHPS) may be falling in the general population. We would like to comment on a recent study² done in British Columbia (BC) which investigated changes and seasonal variation in the incidence of IHPS over a 12 year period.

The BC study² was based on a cohort of 1234 livebirths with IHPS (988 males, 246 females) born

in BC during the years 1966 to 1977 inclusive and identified from the caseload of the population based BC Health Surveillance Registry.³ For the study period, the overall incidence rates for males and females with IHPS were 4.6 and 1.2 per 1000 livebirths respectively. Annual incidence rates for males ranged from 5.9 to 3.8/1000 livebirths and those for females ranged from 1.7 to 0.8/1000 livebirths. During the 12 year survey period, there were no significant overall incidence variations with time or season. The only exception was that the 1974 male incidence rate appeared to be significantly raised ($p < 0.01$), but no similar increase was noted for females.

In conclusion, over a 12 year period BC data do not show any temporal changes in the incidence of IHPS.

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