

Letter to the Editor

Mothers and childhood pneumonia? (Niger J Paed 2013; 40(1): 24-29).

Dear Editor-in-Chief,

I have a few comments on the article "Mothers and childhood pneumonia: what should the focus of public campaigns be?" (Niger J Paed 2013; 40(1): 24-29).

Twelve authors from different institutions are listed but only three are truly accounted for under authors' contribution. "All authors except ECI and BMR conceived the study" needs to be expatiated.

It is important to clarify: 1) that administration of antibiotic is beneficial only in children with bacterial pneumonia, 2) cold refers to cold weather and not upper respiratory tract infection.

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Reply

We acknowledge the comments raised by one of the readers of the Journal, namely that only three of the listed authors truly qualified as authors; that antibiotics administration is only beneficial in children with bacterial pneumonia and that cold refers to cold weather and not to upper respiratory tract infections.

We wish to refer the reader to the conditions for authorship as defined by the International Committee of Medical Editors which states that 'Authorship credit should be based on 1) substantial contributions to conception and design, acquisition of data, *or* analysis and interpretation of data; 2) drafting the article or revising it critically for important intellectual content; and 3) final approval of the version to be published. Authors should meet conditions 1, 2, and 3'. The operational word in the first criterion is '*or*'. Data collection or analysis and

interpretation of data represent an important function even if the authors did not participate in the conceptualization of the research work.

We agree with the reader that antibiotic use in pneumonia benefits only the child with bacterial pneumonia. However for public campaign as part of strategies to reduce deaths from pneumonia administration of antibiotics to children with pneumonia is advocated. This is the message that is passed to healthcare workers who provide care for children with pneumonia, the majority of whom are not paediatricians; this is the message in the case management of pneumonia by the World Health Organization (the Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses)

As highlighted by the reader the cold in the article refers to cold air or cold weather and not upper respiratory tract infections. This distinction is evident in all aspects of the article and does not create room for ambiguity.

Reference

1. Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals: Ethical Considerations in the Conduct and Reporting of Research: Authorship and Contributorship. Accessed at <http://www.icmje.org/ethical> on 12th June, 2013.
2. WHO. Integrated management of childhood illness chart booklet. 2005.
3. WHO. Management of the child with a serious infection or severe malnutrition. Guidelines for care at first-referral level in developing countries. WHO: Geneva 2000.

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