

SUMMARY

DR. WENDY ELIZABETH EDWARDS (CPSO# 66768)

1. Disposition

On September 5, 2018, the Inquiries, Complaints and Reports Committee (the Committee) required paediatrician Dr. Edwards to appear before a panel of the Committee to be cautioned with respect to her use of antibiotics in patients with PANS/PANDAS [paediatric acute-onset neuropsychiatric syndrome/paediatric autoimmune neuropsychiatric disorders associated with Streptococcal infections] and ASD [autism spectrum disorder] and regarding appropriate completion of Special Diet Allowance forms.

In addition, the Committee issued advice to Dr. Edwards as follows:

- to monitor and record blood pressure in patients on stimulant medications;
- to monitor patients for side effects of antifungal medication, including possible liver dysfunction;
- to consider the risks of long-term antifungals and antivirals in patients with ASD, and to discontinue such treatments where they are no longer necessary or are of no benefit;
- to obtain appropriate consent for all off-label use of medications and complementary and alternative medicine (CAM); and
- to seek a second opinion for a PAN/PANDAS patient who does not have consistent and sustained response to treatment; to take the lead in collaborative care with her patients; and to complete conventional testing, for example for parasites, before proceeding to CAM diagnosis and treatment.

2. Introduction

The College received information raising concerns about Dr. Edwards's complementary and alternative medicine practice with respect to a patient who was hospitalized with life-

threatening electrolyte abnormalities. Subsequently, the Committee approved the Registrar's appointment of investigators to conduct a broad review of Dr. Edwards' practice.

Dr. Edwards responded that she has taken great care to ensure that the treatment offered to her patients is done in compliance with the College's *Complementary/Alternative Medicine* policy. She stated that she follows the standard of practice for all non-PANS/PANDAS patients. She noted however, that as outlined in treatment guidelines, the long-term use of antibiotics is indicated in some patients diagnosed with PANDAS.

3. Committee Process

As part of this investigation, the Registrar appointed a Medical Inspector to review a number of Dr. Edwards' patient charts, interview Dr. Edwards, and submit a written report to the Committee.

A General Panel of the Committee, consisting of public and physician members, met to review the relevant records and documents related to the investigation. The Committee always has before it applicable legislation and regulations, along with policies that the College has developed, which reflect the College's professional expectations for physicians practising in Ontario. Current versions of these documents are available on the College's website at www.cpso.on.ca, under the heading "Policies & Publications."

4. Committee's Analysis

The Committee believes Dr. Edwards is a caring physician and wants to help families with children who have difficult-to-treat conditions. It is clear that she is a very competent general paediatrician.

The Committee nonetheless had concerns about aspects of Dr. Edwards' practice. Based on the Medical Inspector's report and Dr. Edwards' responses, most of these concerns can be

addressed through advice as outlined above, although the risk of harm identified to one patient through the overuse and long-term prescription of antibiotics, and the misuse of Special Diet Allowance forms, means the Committee will also caution Dr. Edwards.