

DUBLER

vs. BETHESDA MEMORIAL HOSPITAL, SOLER, M.D., AND MATEO, M.D.

Kawasaki Syndrome is a disease affecting infants and young children. It is a very dangerous illness if untreated for over ten days and can result in giant aneurysms (weakness of the artery walls) of the coronary arteries. The treatment is relatively simple and most often results in a complete recovery. Gamma Globulin therapy and aspirin must be instituted during that ten day window. Parents should be given the option of the Gamma Globulin and aspirin therapy even if their child may not have all the signs of this dreaded disease, as the health risks of such therapy are relatively low.

There is no test for Kawasaki Syndrome. It is recognized by its symptoms: intractable fever of over five days, chapped or cracked lips, conjunctiva (redness in the eyes), rash, swollen lymph nodes (nodules on the side of the neck), and swollen or peeling hands and feet.

With a fever and any three of these symptoms, a pediatrician should have Kawasaki Syndrome in the differential diagnosis. Pediatricians should order an echocardiogram in an effort to determine whether or not aneurysms are developing in the coronary arteries.

Four and a half year old Grant Dubler sadly developed Kawasaki Syndrome. His parents, although in constant contact with pediatricians and infectious disease specialists, were never informed of the therapy available nor the window of opportunity to institute that therapy. Grant went on to develop giant aneurysms of his coronary arteries. His parents were forced to wait until his condition *worsened* to a point of having a heart attack to warrant the risky procedure of bypass surgery. One year ago, Grant's condition reached the point where the likelihood of survival without bypass surgery was less than the risks involved with the surgery. Grant underwent double bypass surgery at the Boston Children's Clinic. Today, Grant is doing well. Unfortunately, he must be subjected to monthly invasive tests to monitor his condition. As one of the youngest double bypass patients ever, he has a very uncertain future. Chris Searcy and Todd Stewart demanded that the doctors pay their insurance policy limits of \$1,250,000, which they promptly did. ■