

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The following letters are representative of those received in response to the editorial on candida autism in ARRI Vol. 2, #2, and Dr. Edward Ritvo's letter in Vol. 2, #4 regarding the editorial.

### To the Editor:

Although skeptics such as Dr. Ritvo may have their doubts, those of us who treat candida infections do see disorders such as autism that are reversed by antifungal therapy and low sugar diets.

I have a recent patient, a six-year-old autistic girl, who following three months of treatment is speaking ten-word sentences and astounding not only her special education teachers but her family and friends. Her candida-related-complex was verified by anticandida antibody tests, history, and clinical assessment. Following eight weeks of treatment with nystatin powder USP her parents noted an improvement in mood and physical coordination, and the beginnings of speech. She is now able to speak sentences and told me during a recent visit, "My mom eats too much sugar!"

I have seen school children described as "retarded," "learning disabled," "hyperactive" and "troubled" improve with antifungal and dietary measures.

Candida infections other than mucocutaneous candida problems seen as thrush and vaginal candidiasis are present in children. Dr. Ritvo should keep an open mind and examine the experiences that clinicians such as myself have seen. Candida autism is not a myth. It is part of a neuro-immune disorder that requires treatment.

Keith W. Sehnert, M.D.

### To the Editor:

I would like to support the observations and comments of Dr. Rimland and to present a point of view which differs from that of Dr. Ritvo. I base my point of view on my own clinical observations and on reports in the scientific literature. Here's a brief summary:

1. In the late 60s and early 70s, Iwata isolated several high and low molecular weight toxins from *Candida albicans*. Subsequently, he reported his studies on candidotoxin in mice. Included were severe nervous system symptoms and immunosuppression.

2. Subsequently, C. Orfan Truss published a series of articles describing systemic and nervous system symptoms in both children and adults who had received repeated or prolonged doses of antibiotic drugs.

3. In 1984 Truss published findings showing that a number of his patients with chronic yeast infections showed abnormalities in fatty acids and amino acids.

4. In 1985, Witkin stated, "Recent studies suggest that candida infection may cause immunosuppression and the immunological alterations may also be related to subsequent . . . autoantibody formation."

I first learned of the Candida/human interaction in the fall of 1979. During the next several years, I treated several hundred adults with multiple symptoms, including fatigue, irritability, depression and memory loss.

In January 1982, I saw a five-and-a-half-year-old child with a history of recurrent ear infections, hyperactivity and autistic type behavior. On a diet eliminating yeast, wheat, sugar and other common foods, this child showed a dramatic improvement. He became more responsive and began to cooperate. On

challenging him with yeast and mushrooms he became hyper, "wild" and aggressive.

Subsequently, this child was given oral nystatin and nutritional supplements. In a progress report (April 10, 1982) by three teachers at the Center for the Early Education for the Handicapped, Franklin, Tennessee, he was described as being significantly better.

During the past several years I've treated four other children with autistic type behavior who have improved on a similar program of management.

In closing I'll acknowledge that this program does not provide a "quick fix" or "cure." Yet, in a disorder as devastating as autism, any safe approach should be considered.

William Crook, M.D.

*Editor's Note: Dr. Crook's letter, shortened to conserve space, included a list of the research articles he cited. Copies of these references are available upon request (send SASE).*

### To the Editor:

My son Daniel is seven years old and was affected with candida autism at about 11 months of age. We have been treating him successfully for the past three years with an immunologist in New York City.

He has made steady progress over the years and many of his "autistic" behaviors are gone. Candida autism *does* exist for some children.

Joan Gold

## Announcements

"High Functioning Individuals With Autism" will be the topic of a two-day conference sponsored by Division TEACCH of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The conference will be held May 18 and 19 in the Chapel Hill area.

For information and/or registration materials for the conference, contact Helen Garrison, Division TEACCH, CB 7180 Medical School Wing E, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, NC 27599-7180. The phone number is (919) 966-2173.

ARRI is interested in hearing from parents and professionals about the types of jobs autistic persons are working in, and the type of training that was required for them to be able to work successfully at these jobs.

We understand that autistic people are working successfully in library and copy shop jobs, piano tuning, archeology (as assistants at digs), farming, carpentry and other fields, as well as in traditional jobs such as food service and assembly. ARRI

would like to let our readers know about the variety of careers which may be open to autistic workers.

The Autism Society of America will host "Bridges," its 24th annual conference July 19-22 at the University of Washington in Seattle. For information or to submit proposals for presentation, write to ASA c/o Fircrest School, 15320 N.E. 15th, Seattle, WA 98155.

**Neo Mull Soy/autism children sought:**  
The soy-based baby formula Neo Mull Soy was produced without sufficient chloride, an essential nutrient, from 1972 to 1978. It is possible that chloride deficiency may have produced chronic autism-like behaviors in some children. ICBR is seeking contact with parents of autistic-like children given Neo Mull Soy between 1972 and 1978, for possible participation in a simple, safe, no-cost research study. Write ARRI if interested.

### In Memoriam

Kiyo Kitahara, founder of the Higashi Schools in Tokyo and Boston, died of a heart attack on January 16. The Tokyo Higashi School, which includes 500 autistic children among the school's 1800 students, is the world's largest—and possibly the world's most innovative—center for autistic children.

Niko Tinbergen, awarded a Nobel Prize in 1973 for his pioneering work on animal behavior, died in England in late 1988. Dr. Tinbergen and his wife Elisabeth became interested in autism late in their careers, and wrote two books presenting their views on the cause and treatment of autism.

### Correction

In the article on Asperger's syndrome in our last issue, we stated that Lorna Wing considered Asperger's to be a separate disorder from autism. While Dr. Wing does believe that the term "Asperger's syndrome" is helpful as a descriptive term for people with autistic-like symptoms but without the severe grammatical problems and withdrawal of typical autism, she does not feel that Asperger's and autism are separate disorders.