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Should Malnourished Children be Included for Defining Normative Values ?

Gupta and Ahmed(1) have attempted to establish the normative values for blood pressure (BP) in a fairly large sample of school children. It is clear from their obser-

vations that mean systolic and diastolic blood pressure are lower compared to Task Force Committee Report(2). This may indicate that if values of Task Force Committee Report are followed in routine practice, some of the hypertensive Indian children will not be designated so, with obvious long term implications. But the authors do not mention whether malnourished children were excluded for establishing the normative values? However, looking at the *Figs. 1 and 2*, it seems that malnourished children were not excluded(1). This raises a question whether malnourished children should be included for defining normative values?.

Further, *Figs. 1 and 2* of the article show the effect of nutritional status of BP as the children are grouped according to weight compared to the reference weight; while authors maintain that this shows the influence of weight on BP. *Figure 1* also shows that nutritional status influences the BP and hence inclusion of malnourished children for defining normative values will influence the results. Increase in body weight has earlier been shown to have a positive correlation with BP(3).

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Reply

The authors appreciate the interest taken by Dr. Chandra in our study. The question whether malnourished children should be included or excluded for defining normative values of blood pressure in any study on establishing norms of blood pressure in a given population, is quite relevant.

The present study was carried out in a large population of apparently healthy school children to establish normative values for systolic and diastolic blood pressures in Indian population. All attempts were made to include children from varying socio-economic backgrounds so that the final data is applicable to all children of different socio-economic categories. It is well known that increase in body weight is associated with increasing blood pressure(1). The mean values for systolic and diastolic blood pressure in the present study were lower as compared to that found in the Task Force Committee Report(2) since the 50th percentile of Indian children for body weight is significantly lower than those of Western children(3,4). No doubt that inclusion of malnourished children has resulted in lower normative values in the present study; however, the normative values as established by us are applicable to normal childhood population irrespective of nutritional status. In conclusion our data is in the form of a bell shape normal distribution which is

true for any epidemiological study on establishing norms(5).

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Demonstration of Brain Lesions in Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia by Magnetic Resonance Imaging

We report brain lesions demonstrated on magnetic reassurance imaging (MRI) in a patient of acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL).

An 11-year-old male, diagnosed case of