Health Problems in Chinese Children Are Different

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Literature review and author's personal observations have shown that Chinese children are uniquely different, not only in their look but also in many medical and health conditions. Genetic make-up accounts for some of the differences. Traditions and environment exert significant influences also. Many traditional practices produce clinical problems which are not encountered in the west. Infections are different in Chinese; there are much fewer E.coli sepsis in the neonates, and invasive Haemophilus influenzae type-b (Hib) infections in early childhood and infectious mononucleosis syndrome in the adolescents are uncommon. These findings, together with differences in the pattern of many other infectious conditions are highly suggestive of an enhanced herd immunity from a multitude of early antigenic stimulations. As significant number of Chinese people have emigrated to settle in many overseas places in recent years, child care workers should be alerted to some of these unique health features to ensure they can provide the optimal management for these Chinese children. (HK J Paediatr (new series) 2003;8:70-86)

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