
Extent of cotton-bud use in ears

Nagal and colleagues again raise ENT surgeons' concerns about the use of cotton-buds in the ear canal.¹

As a GP I have always counselled against the use of cotton buds in this way. However I have comparatively rarely seen complications.

If 68% of the population are using cotton-buds in the ear it seems that complications of this practice, as a proportion of the number of times it is performed, must be very rare. Are we worrying too much?

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REFERENCE

1. Nagala S, Singh P, Tostevin P. Extent of cotton-bud use in ears. *Br J Gen Pract* 2011; **61(592)**: 662.

DOI: 10.3399/bjgp11X613089

Nursing care in hospitals

The inadequacies and failings of nursing care in our hospitals have been in the news recently and seem to have triggered much public comment, and even discontent. I was somewhat surprised to see Dr Clare Gerada's name linked in agreement with the views of Dr Peter Carter, general secretary of the Royal College of Nursing. It seems that Dr Carter wants relatives to free up nursing time by feeding and caring for relatives in hospital. There are very real problems delivering good quality nursing care these days that must be addressed, and

soon, but this suggestion cannot provide much of an answer. Most relatives will be happy to do what they can when they can. However, so many relatives need to work, and others live a significant distance from hospitalised family members. A majority, one feels, will be uneasy and ill prepared when carrying out intimate nursing tasks. None can provide 24-hour professional care. Dr Gerada may well have been misrepresented but surely this is not Royal College of General Practitioners policy.

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Conflict of Interest

Septuagenarian.

DOI: 10.3399/bjgp11X613098