

## Correspondence

### Pattern of congenital heart disease in Southern Yemeni children referred for echocardiography

To the Editor

I have 2 comments on the interesting study by Saleh<sup>1</sup> on the pattern of congenital heart disease in Southern Yemeni children referred for echocardiography.

First, I was unable to source any published data considering the exact prevalence of congenital heart disease (CHD) in Yemeni children. However, Saleh's study<sup>1</sup> addressed 38% frequency distribution of CHD in the studied children. The discrepancy between this figure and those reported in some Arabian countries of Iraq (8.5%),<sup>2</sup> Oman (32.1%),<sup>3</sup> Sudan (56%),<sup>4</sup> and Lebanon (91.7%)<sup>5</sup> might reflect the followings: 1) variations in the magnitude of genetic and environmental factors implicated in the etiology of CHD among these countries. 2) variations in the skills and experiences of the personnel who conducted and analyzed the echocardiography or Doppler studies.

Second, the horizon of CHD in Yemen is still puzzling because of tremendous barriers addressed by Saleh's study<sup>1</sup> that curtail successful institution of epidemiologic, diagnostic, and therapeutic workup of CHD. Alleviation of these barriers represents half of the paved roadmap designed to contain CHD in Yemeni children. The other half must be filled by contemplation of effective preventive programs. Smoking, dietary style, alcohol consumption, consanguinity, maternal age, and periconceptional events are well-known risk factors that increase predisposition to have offspring with CHD.<sup>6-9</sup> Therefore, additional extensive studies are needed to determine the relevant risk factors of CHD in Yemen and appropriate strategic preventive measures must be set.

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### Reply from the Author

No reply was received from the Author.

### References

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### Related topics

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Zaidi SM, Al-Sharary MM, Al-Khuwaitir TS, Sajid NU. Congenitally corrected transposition of great arteries with ischemic symptoms in middle age. *Saudi Med J* 2007; 28: 1597-1599.