

with mercury poisoning presented with generalized dermatitis and abnormal liver function<sup>6</sup> similar to the present case. On the other hand, the prevalence of liver disease in a population from Minamata area (organic methyl mercury poisoning) was not increased compared with unexposed controls.<sup>7</sup>

Dr Albrecht's case illustrates a multifaceted presentation of mercury poisoning.

—H.C. George Wong, MD  
Vancouver

#### References

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## June 2008 AGM: A little out of the ordinary



Attendance at annual general meetings (AGMs) of any organization is poor more often than not. And, no matter the organization, the same reasons for not attending can usually be heard: don't have the time, topics to be discussed have no interest for me, travel and accommodation costs too much, little opportunity to voice my concerns, and so on. Your association's AGM is no different.

In my 18 years of being involved with the BC Medical Association, only a handful of AGMs have been well attended—usually those in which the association has been steeped in controversy and members had a keen interest in being updated or had something to say on the topic. Perhaps the best example was the 1980 AGM held in Penticton when the BC government introduced legislation to ban “balance billing,” a provision to which physicians had been entitled since the introduction of medicare. There have been subsequent years of increased interest, again commonly involving financial issues, which is in itself rather sad-denying, albeit unsurprising.

However, I very much look forward to this year's event—not because I anticipate rousing discussions on contentious issues, but because of its interesting location and what that location represents to the future of the profession. This year's AGM will be held at the University of Northern BC (UNBC) in Prince George on 7 June. Known as BC's northern capital, Prince George has a rich industrial backbone, a thriving arts scene, and some of the most beautiful northern terrain around.

Credit for the AGM's change in location this year to the University of

Northern BC must be given to Dr Don Rix, chair of the Board of Governors of UNBC. With its emphasis on training physicians in the north for rural and northern practice, UNBC is unique in the province. This June will also be the first year of graduation of medical students from UNBC—timed perfectly for the AGM. Our thanks go out to UNBC President and Vice-chancellor Dr Don Cozzetto and Mayor Colin Kinsley of Prince George, who offered to host the annual meeting at the spectacular UNBC campus. This will be a wonderful opportunity to showcase the northern medical school, as well as the recently opened state-of-the-art sports centre.

I think we can anticipate that the physicians of Prince George will go out of their way to make the annual meeting both successful and memorable (knowing some of the characters in Prince George, this will be possible in more ways than I can imagine!).

As an added incentive, a 1-day CME event will be held on Friday, 6 June. For the last several years, Prince George has hosted a Northern Doctors Day, a very successful program normally held earlier in the year. The organizers asked if this year it could be held at the time of the AGM—a natural fit. Details will be sent out with the AGM material.

This year I hope you will consider attending. It will be a great opportunity for those physicians living in and around this northern community who rarely make it down to the Vancouver-held AGMs, and for urban physicians to experience the rugged beauty of the north.

See you there.

—Geoffrey Appleton, MB  
BCMA President