Reply to letter to the editor concerning: A variant pattern of Calretinin immunohistochemistry on rectal suction-biopsies is fully specific of short-segment Hirschsprung's disease. Vincent Guinard-Samuel, Arnaud Bonnard, Michel Peuchmaur and Dominique Berrebi. *Pediatr Surg Int* (2014) 30: 803–808

**Arnaud Bonnard · Dominique Berrebi ·
Vincent Guinard-Samuel**

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Dear Dr. Tan,

Thank you for your interesting comments on our article describing a variant calretinin immunostaining in Hirschsprung's disease.

Regarding your first remark on the drastic raise of variant pattern (P+) biopsies from 1/131 to 18/44, the answer is quite simple: in the first place, we believed that the stippled pattern was non-specific, and we did not give it much care. When we recognized the ultrashort case in our first series, we started looking for more subtle patterns and indeed found them more frequently. We have not reviewed our first 131 biopsies, but we believe that we would find many more P+ biopsies among them. As our present paper included 44 consecutive patients, the real frequency of P+ staining is likely to be close to the one we found here.

Regarding your discussion about the link between P+ biopsies and the transitional zone, we believe it would be

wrong to say that the biopsy is more likely to be made in the transitional zone, since all of our biopsies met histological criteria for aganglionic zone of Hirschsprung's disease (no ganglion cell, nerve hyperplasia) and not for transitional zone. Therefore, our P+ biopsies are genuine aganglionic zone, but the positivity of calretinin nerves only adds supplementary information: the ganglionic zone (and even more the transitional zone) is not far from the site of suction biopsy.

We would like to add that we evaluated prospectively (data not shown) this result. For all patients with a variant pattern on suction biopsy, trans-anal pull through was done without any umbilical approach for frozen section, and patients indeed presented with a short (rectosigmoidian) form of HD in all cases.

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