FIG. 1.—Magnetic resonance imaging showing multiple enhanced masses over the left posterior frontal parasagittal, left anterior frontal, parietal and right temporal regions.

day) and 5-flucytosine (5-FC) (100 mg/kg/day) for 4 weeks. Amphotericin B was changed to fluconazole (6 mg/kg/day) because of progressively deteriorating renal function. A follow-up computed tomography (CT) scan of the brain showed much reduction in the size of brain abscesses after an additional 20 weeks therapy. The Cryptococcus antigen (latex agglutination) also declined from an initial titre of 1:512 to zero. The patient has been in an uneventful condition without neurological deficit.

The common initial presenting features of cryptococcal brain abscess are non-specific and difficult to differentiate from the neuropsychiatric symptoms of SLE. Although rare, the cryptococcal brain abscess should be kept in mind in patients with SLE because of suppressed cell-mediated immunity in these patients. The survival rate in cryptococcaemia has improved to 44% since the advent of combination therapy with amphotericin B plus 5-FC [7]. However, our case suggested that fluconazole was effective in cryptococcal brain abscess and suitable for long-term use. Finally, as the decline of the serum titre of Cryptococcus antigen was correlated with the improving clinical features and imaging studies, serial measurements of serum cryptococcal antigen should be useful in diagnosing and treating these patients. [8].

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School Christmas Shows ... 'Look Out the Backache is Behind You'

Sir—The school show is a time-honoured institution of the Christmas season. However, it is common to hear from those who had attended a show that enjoyment had been dampened because of the development of backache or other discomfort which is frequently attributed to sitting on inappropriate low seats (Fig. 1). This study was undertaken to see how often backache is experienced at school Christmas shows and what factors might influence the development of backache.

A questionnaire was sent to 190 hospital staff in early January. A total of 131 forms (69%) were returned. Forty-three people had been to a school Christmas show. Twenty-one (49%) had experienced back pain during or after the show, varying from severe (13%) to mild (48%); the pain lasted an average of 13 h (range 0.5-120 h). The lower the seat, the more likely it was for backache to occur, and the longer the backache was likely to last (Table I). Of the 21 people who had attended a show lasting < 1 h, nine (42%) developed backache; of the 20 who had been to a show lasting more than an hour, 13 (65%) developed backache, would expect to suffer backache if sitting in a cinema, theatre, car, train or plane. So school Christmas shows are far more likely to induce backache than other normal circumstance for this group of attenders. Eighty-seven people did not attend a school show; 12 of these stated that they avoided such events, but only one of these was because of previous back problems at shows. Forty of the 87 answered questions about their everyday experience of back pain: 46% would expect to suffer backache if sitting in a cinema, theatre, car,
train or plane. Thus, non-show attenders had a much higher expectation of experiencing backache than those who had been to a show.

Insufficient numbers were prepared to divulge their age to allow us to assess whether age was a factor; however, several of the non-attenders admitted that their children had grown up so they may have been an older age group. Among those who went to shows, 33 were parents, of whom 15 (45%) developed backache, whilst 10 were grandparents or others, of whom six (60%) suffered backache (two of the three to develop severe backache were grandparents). Therefore, it seems that the older members of the show-going group were more prone to backache.

From this study, it can be seen that attendance at a school show may induce backache, although it is not likely to be severe or prolonged. A low seat, a long show, and possibly increased age, were associated with a higher incidence of backache. Could other factors be involved? One parent admitted 'psychological trauma' when his offspring forgot his lines; there was another added comment that the show felt like it lasted 5 h. So it may be that for some people tension and, for others, boredom are factors.

It seems that the best chance of enjoyment is at a show that lasts not too long, is entertaining and is watched while sitting on a full-size adult chair. Grandparents should be particularly attentive to these points.

### TABLE I

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seat size</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Backache occurred</th>
<th>Pain grade</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very low</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Adult'</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of four people who did not develop backache, two had stood throughout the show and two did not specify the height of seat used.

I thank the hospital staff who answered the questions; Dr A. R. Davidson, Mrs Ann Williams, the Clinical Audit Department, KGH, and Mrs Carol Loasby for their considerable help with this paper; Mr Peter Eden for the photographs and Mrs Lyn Meyer of the Kettering General Hospital Children's Ward School for the use of the chairs.

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![Fig. 1.](https://academic.oup.com/rheumatology/article-abstract/35/12/1335/1783171/fig-1335-001){:width=4000px}

**Fig. 1.** (A) 181 cm adult sitting on a full-size adult chair. (B) The same adult on a small infant-size chair with overflexed knees, hips and lumbar spine.