

Letter to the Editor

A novel method of removing a foreign body from the external ear canal

To the Editor: A bewildered 7-year-old girl presented with a smooth plastic bead impacted into the right ear canal. On examination the canal was swollen, irritated and tender owing to previous attempts to remove the bead. The bead, measuring 4 mm in diameter, was pushed almost against the eardrum. A further attempt to remove the bead resulted in an agonised yell — further attempts to remove the foreign body were aborted. The parents were unemployed and could not afford private hospitalisation, nor did they own a car for transport to a government hospital. The patient was sent home for 48 hours to calm down before a further attempt to retrieve the foreign body. On her return a novel method was applied. The application stick of a cotton bud was amputated

so that the cotton end was removed. A small amount of quick-setting super glue was applied to the amputated blunt end of the cotton bud. The glued cotton bud end was then carefully placed in contact with the plastic bead. After a few minutes the cotton bud stick was retrieved with the plastic bead attached to it.

The procedure was painless and the patient was discharged with the bead safely in mother's hand.

Johan B. Janeke

PO Box 1728
Mulbarton
2059