6/12/20: Summer Fever; Lyme or Covid? (Schreiber & El Chebib)

What is the sensitivity of throat versus NP PCR testing? I do not think we have exact numbers but from previous studies that involved swabs for viral infections from NP vs throat, the yield from the NP swabs are much better when compared to those from the throat.

How likely and when will a 2nd wave hit? Specifically, will public schools and universities open up in Aug/Sept and how likely will they have to close in the fall and winter? Given the data from the other states that opened up earlier, a spike in cases in expected. The extent of the spike will depend on how much people will stick with the social distancing and masking. During the fall, I think we will have much testing capabilities and contact tracing and I feel that schools and universities will open. It will be important to continue social distancing and masking come this fall and winter.

In line with the above question, can we do a group discussion involving you, some reps from the ER, some reps from the Hospitalist group so we can come up with best practices for children in CT. You don’t need to read this question out loud but just an idea that may help all of us. That is a great idea. I will leave that to the group to decide on who needs to tend and when. Thanks

What do you think impact of crowding during recent protests?
In terms of crowding during any event my suggestion is first to try and avoid this if possible. If one must be at an event or rally of some sort that has many people it will be critical to wear a mask at all times and to wash hands frequently. Physical distancing is also still very important so again events that create lack of physical distancing should be avoided.

6/26/20: Return to Schools & Vaccines (Schreiber, Frasinelli, Kutson, Bolduc)

Will Pre-K be reopening in the fall also?
If they are par of a local school district, yes.

Are legislators being contacted about laws regarding exemptions for coronavirus vaccine and attendance at public school?
Legislators are being updated on all correspondence to schools as well as policy guidance.

How does a school handle a child who either refuses to wear a mask in class, or the family doesn’t enforce mask wearing? What happens to those kids?
When children are back in school, and a child develops 102 degree fever during the day and cough and is sent home: How long should he be kept out of school if he has a specific diagnosis, of say strep throat, or if no specific do is made and he has respiratory symptoms. Does Covid testing positive or negative change your response?
What do we do about close contacts in school?

Reopening Guidelines will be released next week to address more specific concerns
Is the flu vaccine safe for people with a severe latex allergy?
Yes the flu vaccine is safe for people with a severe latex allergy

Unfortunately many EMR including OP still not compatible with CT whiz.
I would encourage you to visit the CT WiZ home page or create a ticket: https://portal.ct.gov/DPH/Immunizations/ALL-ABOUT-CT-WiZ You can also e-mail our registry coordinator Nancy Sharova: nancy.sharova@ct.gov

Will flu vaccine be free for children 18 and under? and at certain locations?
Yes the flu vaccine is available for all children including those with private insurance up through the age of 18 years of age.

Can the medical providers and APP’s partner with our community pediatricians to help vaccinate CT Children?
I think it will take the efforts of all providers across the state to catch children up. DPH is working with the state AAP to facilitate this.

Can you address the issue of the flu vaccine only having 40-50% effectiveness?
Flu vaccine effectiveness has always been an issue but the main value of flu vaccines is in preventing severe illness and mortality. That being said a vaccine is of no use if it doesn't get administered.

7/17/20: Supporting Adolescents and Young Adults During the COVID-19 Pandemic (Schreiber & MacCormac)

Resources:
https://www.voicesofyouth.org/campaign/covid-19-and-youth-mental-health
https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/q-a-for-adolescents-and-youth-related-to-covid-19

7/24/20: Intimate Partner Violence and COVID-19 (Schreiber & Starr-Frechette)

Can you comment on how school opening can possibly work to maintain the flattened curve that CT achieved?
I think with temps on entrance, co-horting, masks, and staggered classes it might be possible to have a hybrid in class and virtual model.

Can you discuss the new travel policy?
Please see the new policy which conforms to the CT mandates on the intranet.

Do you feel that CT's numbers are accurate with the recent delays in testing results, with results taking 7-10 days to come back? Do you think it will have any effect on us containing this if the numbers start to rise and we may not know it?
I think there may be a slight delay in seeing an up-tick but CT is watching pretty closely compared to other states and our numbers are so small we can track well.

My husband, the real estate lawyer has a theory as to why younger children don’t seem to spread covid - they are too short!! Their respiratory droplets are not reaching our faces! Do we yet know how many younger children actually have the disease?
We know that younger kids in infected households do not acquire the infection as easily as older kids and adults and we do not know why that said in Florida thousands of kids are infected we just do not understand this yet.

Many of us are helping our schools develop plans. One question that came to me was.....if one child is sent home from school due to possible covid symptoms , should the sibling also be sent home and quarantined unless there is a negative covid test or positive strep etc.
I can only give you my opinion in that I am not sure that is practical and with daily temps and masks maybe we do not have to do that.

How is mandatory quarantine of out of state travelers enforced in CT? Is it by honor system? If so, how effective is that?
Well it is America and we struggle with this kind of thing. Right now we count on people to fill out the form and self quarantine. Some will and some will not which is why we need to keep our physical distancing and mask use up.

Any suggestions for office planning for administering Flu vaccines this year? The usual method of family flu clinics seems problematic when we are trying to social distance/ keep traffic flow down in our offices?
Any way we can screen for temp wear masks do the clinics while our community spread is very low still.

If an employee is coming from over seas can we also test or only quarantine?
They should quarantine and I think can be tested here and quarantine until results are back.

7/31/20: Impact of Covid-19 on out Inner-City Youth
(Schreiber, Warren-Dias, Ruiz)

What is the training and qualifications for a Certified Recovery Coach?
https://hhcbehavioralhealth.org/programs-services/recovery-leadership-academy
- 80 Hour Course that prepares persons in recovery from a psychiatric or substance use disorder, or family members of people in recovery, to take an exam to become a certified Recovery Support Specialist (RSS)
- Recovery Support Specialists work in behavioral health systems across the state using their own experience with recovery to support those seeking or currently receiving treatment for mental illness or substance use

9/18/20: Mental Health in the Era of COVID (Schreiber, Santos)

What do you think of the "herd mentality" approach to the pandemic?
The challenge with this idea is that around 60% of the population needs to be infected to achieve herd immunity. At that level of infection it is hundreds of thousands of more deaths.

Which type of test does the Canton CVS use?
I do not know which test they are suing although I have heard it is PCR. One needs to check with CVS to determine this
Several studies state that at day 10 the virus is no longer infective and the DPH recommendation for return to work is at day 10 if afebrile for 24 hours and improvement in symptoms!

Yes the recommendation by DPH and CDC is 24 hrs no fever AND 10 days since symptoms first appeared assuming symptom free or "improved" day 10

How do we know the changes are significant for depression and anxiety, not just they are please? A year ago, the rates of depression and anxiety were around 10%, now it is up to 50% for some age groups. That is statistically significant. We are starting to see more data come out of China that is showing these trends as well and I anticipate we will start to see more US data in the next couple months.

Is there a phone number for access mental health?
ACCESS Mental Health CT is a program that offers free, timely consultative services for PCPs seeking assistance in providing behavioral health care to children and adolescents under the age of 19 years, irrespective of insurance. Hartford Hospital Hub 855-561-7135; Wheeler Clinic Hub 855-631-9835; Yale Child Study Hub 844-751-8955

9/25/20: Obesity Prevention and Treatment in the Time of COVID
(Schreiber, Trout, Williams)
What is the evidence for success of the interventions in place for childhood obesity? What do we know about what really works?
For weight loss medications in children and teens there is a fantastic article with treatment recommendations (see attached): Clinical Considerations for Pediatric Obesity Pharmacotherapy, Obesity (2019) 27, 190-204. doi:10.1002/oby.22385. There are a number of excellent references for each medication within that article. Additionally, there is a JAMA article for Liraglutide in teens: https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMoa1916038?query=recirc_top_ribbon_article_3. Finally, for Metformin: Sadeghi et al. Metformin therapy reduced obesity indices in children and adolescents: A systematic review and meta-analysis of Randomized Clinical Trials. Childhood Obesity. 2020.

Bariatric surgery in teens: excellent data is available for outcomes related to weight loss, safety and co-morbidity reduction at TeenLABS (Longitudinal Assessment of Bariatric Surgery) representing multi-center data for teens in Bariatric surgery treatment programs, on line at https://medschool.cuanschutz.edu/surgery/research/teen-labs/home

Is there an equation that calculates percent of the 95th percentile?
If your EHR does not have an Extended BMI curve available:
% above the 95th = patient’s BMI divided by the BMI # if that patient were at the 95th.
For example, a child’s BMI is 30, and the 95th percentile BMI would be 25 for that child’s gender and age = 1.2 → 120% above the 95th percentile.

10/9/20: The Latest on COVID 19 Immigrant Care and Legal Repercussions for the the State's Pediatric Population (Schreiber, Sicklick, Marealle)

Can I get tested for COVID-19 if I don't have health insurance?
• Yes. There are several options to get a free COVID-19 test, regardless of your health insurance or immigration status: Make an appointment to get tested at a hospital or community-based health center or one of their pop-up locations. Many of these sites offer drive-up and walk-up testing options. When you make an appointment, confirm that the site provides free testing and related services for people without health insurance, regardless of immigration status. Please call 2-1-1 or visit www.211ct.org/search to find a testing location near you.
• Testing is available at various pharmacy based testing locations throughout the state. Go online to be pre-screened for CVS rapid testing and get an appointment.
10/23/20: Anti-Poverty Medicine: A New Approach to Improve Child Health (Schreiber, Marcil)

Are you partnering with first time homeowners programs such as housing financial authorities?
No, but I think that would be an effective idea!

Do we have any morbidity and mortality data for economic recessions? How would we determine this?
Some data have been published on the negative child mental health outcomes that were associated with the last recession. I'm less sure of whether physical health outcomes have been studied.

Does your financial medical model include interventions for wealth investment within communities with high rates of poverty?
If I'm understanding this correctly, the question is whether we've looked into investing dollars into the community at large rather than individual patients. We do not specifically do this, but I think it's a great idea. The Healthcare Anchor Network uses this idea - I would check it out. Both Boston Medical Center and Nationwide Children's Hospital (among others, I'm sure) have programs that are more community-investment focused in respect to rehabilitating housing and providing supportive housing.

10/30/20: Pediatric Asthma and COVID-19 (Schreiber, Hollenbach, Collins)

NY has mandated to test for COVID and Flu at the same time in sick patients, Could you comment on this?
There are assays such as ones from Cepheid and Roche that test for both flu and covid at the same time. Connecticut Children's will have one shortly that is PCR and highly accurate.

Can you please comment on spread within schools?
Spread within schools seems to be more frequent in older age groups and teenagers. There is some controversy about the efficiency of spread in younger age schools and day care centers with data showing spread to families and some showing little spread.

Is the theory behind Eli Lilly's antibody therapy similar to the Regeneron product?
Yes but most feel early or prophylaxis with monoclonal antibodies will be far more effective than treatment of established disease.

I've heard that wearing gloves is worse than using your hands with frequent hand sanitizer; although I suppose the pollers can sanitize their gloves intermittently as well.
Gloves worn properly and removed properly provide protection. When removed improperly they can be an issue. Washing hands before and after gloves are on is critical.

Has there been any new data to suggest that mask usage decreases risk of exposure to the MASK WEARER?
Yes wearing masks reduces risk to those nearby in case you are infected. In addition, if you have a mask on and are exposed to a positive case data suggests you will have some protection from acquiring the infection. This protection is enhanced with eye wear such as goggles.

11/6/20: Supporting Children with Special Needs & their Families during Covid (Schreiber, Tramantano-Kelly)

Below is a list CTFSN FB groups/pages that anyone can join to stay connected at your convenience:

- CTFSN Facebook Page
- Building a Supportive Community in Connecticut
- CTFSN Deaf or Hard of Hearing Learning Community
- CTFSN Creative Housing
- CTFSN Group for Parents of Adults with Special Needs
- CTFSN Grupo de Apoyo de Necesidades Especiales en Español
• CTFSN Support Group for Northwestern Connecticut
• Special Needs Support and Self-Care for Parents – You Are Not Alone! CTFN Bookworms: Talking about Special Books with Special Families
• CTFSN and SARAH Inc. Family Support Community

CT Parent Advocacy Center
http://cpacinc.org/

Special Education Guidance and Resources for COVID-19
https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Special-Education/Bureau-of-Special-Education/Coronavirus

Child Health Development Institute- COVID-19 Resources for Pediatrics

CT State Department of Education-Resources for Families

CTFSN Contact Information:
www.ctfsn.org
1-877-376-2329
https://www.facebook.com/CTFSN
https://twitter.com/ctfsn
https://www.instagram.com/ctfsn_info/
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCUXFQkT16d0fCkRDjVWDsQ/videos

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11/13/20: We will pull out of the weeds and view the long-term impact of COVID on the actual practice of independent pediatrics. What does the post-COVID landscape offer for pediatricians and their patients?19 (Schreiber, Hart)

https://forum.pediatricsupport.com/

Chip Hart - Pediatric Solutions- Physician’s Computer Company
chip @ pcc.com
800-722-7708
http://chipsblog.pcc.com

What advice can you give to community pediatricians who may soon be receiving questions about results and follow up on the BinaxNOW rapid antigen tests that CT schools will be using?
They have a 70% sensitivity but good specificity so if positive it is correct if negative could be wrong and needs a pcr to confirm.
Since vaccines usually go through years of testing, how can we trust a vaccine that came out in just under a year? We need to look over the data carefully. That said, these are not live virus vaccines and the RNA vaccines are fragments of genetic material that elicit anti spike protein immune responses. Severe issues are unlikely but to your point this is a risk benefit equation. Do we stop hundreds of thousands of deaths and morbidity at the risk of a very few serious side effects if any.

I have 2 daughters coming home from college out of state for Thanksgiving and staying until end of Jan. Can they just walk into any Quest lab for an RT-PCR Covid test w/o a doctors order before heading North and again on arrival in CT? I assume you primary care office should call in these orders.

I spoke with HH lab earlier this week. They indicated the viral load in an NP specimen >OP specimen, but both are orders of magnitude above even the Cepheid at 5400. Do you think it supports our devices will capture the virus well, regardless of the swabbing location and our device? If true, it might help viewers understand the relative sensitivity of all of our devices are sensitive enough to be highly accurate. Our molecular RT PCR that is lab based is highly sensitive and that makes nasal swabs realistic to use without problem.

I am a medical advisor to a school. The school is still very focused on sanitizing surfaces. They are excellent about mask wearing, hand hygiene, and distancing. Is it possible to move away from spraying surfaces and materials with disinfectants. Honestly I think I suggest to keep doing it. The virus does adhere to and survive on smooth surfaces. Although it is not the major cause of spread it probably does have a small role.

Would you recommend specific testing in residential communities where if the virus enters it would be from staff? Yes testing staff and residents a good idea.

Is there a rapid PCR test? Yes Cepheid has one as does Abbott. They seem to be not as sensitive as lab based pcr.

My office assistant tested positive for covid and was in the office the 2 days prior to her fever starting/ day of her test. Do I close the office? Do I inform the patients from those 2 days & prior? When should I be tested? I assume immediately and again if I become symptomatic? We have a mandatory mask and eye protection policy so that is the only thing comforting me right now... Yes theoretically one can shed virus two days before having symptoms. If in PPE with eye protection that is a low risk exposure.

With different types of vaccines in the pipeline, if some of the earlier released vaccines are used in a person, and a later vaccine proves to be more effective, would the receipt of the earlier vaccine prohibit receipt of the later more effective vaccine? I do not think we will be able to mix and match the different vaccines. I do not know what the recommendations from the CDC will be on this.

Is the Yale Saliva Direct test available in CT? It might be but I have not used it.

We had an employee get a rapid test which came back positive but them 2 PCR tests came back negative? We’ve heard that Rapid tests can false positive results but now we’re hearing they can do false negative results. Why would anyone bother with a rapid test? The rapid tests are not as good as lab based RT PCR which is the gold standard.

11/20/20: COVID-19 Return to Sports Cardiac Evaluation (Schreiber, Lapuk)

Iowa is showing high rates of influenza-like-illness as well (on the CDC Fluview). Is that COVID? Or do you think it’s flu? I assume (perhaps incorrectly) that the data is collected from ERs so is this a question of platforms that don’t allow providers to input COVID data? There is an enormous covid outbreak there. I don’t know the data as to whether there is also influenza circulating in Iowa as well.

How are all participants in a vaccine trial equally exposed to SARS-CoV-2, whether they received vaccine or placebo?
That is a good question. We have not seen all the vaccine data from the companies nor has it been subjected to peer review.

Any advice on if we need to go back to more telemedicine visits for routine visits like mental health at this point with the current level of community spread? I anticipate that community spread will get worse before it gets better and that telemedicine will be very important.

Please go through a clear rec on what to do specifically with the college kids coming home this week and for the next month? Masked? Isolated? Testing- more than once? Frequency? Lots of questions from families on this. Would also be great if this could be an “article” added to the CT Children’s Coronavirus website resources, so we could give families a place to go to see it after calls with us. I’d follow CDC guidelines and state DPH rules on coming from a hotspot, unless they are coming from one of the very few green states.

Links:
https://www.connecticutchildrens.org/clinical-pathways/covid-19/