

## Authors' Response

Sir,

We appreciate the interest that Drs Di Maio have expressed in our article "Elevated morphine concentrations determined during infant death investigations: artifacts of withdrawal of care." We feel that it is important to note that this article was written both to highlight the fact that elevated postmortem morphine blood concentrations may arise as a result of administration around the time of withdrawal of care, and to provide some data as to the magnitude of such concentrations in postmortem blood, as no such data appear to be available in the literature currently. The information on administered doses was included solely to provide a comprehensive description of the case circumstances and thus an interpretative

context for the data. The ethics of opiate administration and the suitability of a given dose during pediatric palliative care are considered outside the intended scope of our article.

In the Province of Ontario, while it is the role of the toxicologist to identify putative toxicological causes or contributions to death, it is the role of the coroner to ultimately rule on the cause and manner of death.

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