

3. Wall EM. Family physicians performing obstetrics: is malpractice liability the only obstacle? *J Am Board Fam Pract* 1992; 5:440-3.

#### **Autonomic Response to Beeper**

*To the Editor:* As a family physician for 25 years I, of course, carried a conventional "beeper" for most of that time. I was in a very busy clinical practice, receiving many telephone calls and being paged frequently. It subsequently came to pass that in response to the beeper beeping, I would develop an anxiety syndrome, complete with tachycardia, diaphoresis, and just an uncomfortable feeling.

I was relieved, therefore, when the new technology was introduced that allowed one to be "vibrated." I fastened the new beeper more or less on the right side and was delighted to have no interruptions by the piercing shrill beep that had made me so uncomfort-

able. It soon happened, however, that I would be awakened in the middle of the night with a vibratory sensation in the area where my beeper was ordinarily carried. But I was not wearing a beeper. In short, I was having a tactile hallucination in the area of the beeper, which, of course, I found somewhat alarming and unacceptable.

I now carry a wrist beeper that alerts me with one gentle, almost inaudible "ding," which I find much more acceptable and does not seem to elicit the autonomic response that the previous old-fashioned beeper did. I am also happy to report that my tactile hallucinations have resolved. I would be interested to know whether any of your other colleagues have had similar experiences with paging devices.

William A. Calderwood, MD  
Sun City West, AZ