MINERVA

A 34 year old woman with a history of severe perianal and vulval ulceration

Try the picture quiz in ENDGAMES, p 1203

Canada may open its doors to vitamin and mineral food additives that cater to public interest and demand rather than nutritional rationale. Although the additives will be within the parameters of national food standards and guidelines, discretionary fortification could lead to long term risks due to chronic, unnecessary overexposure to nutrients. Decades of post market surveillance may be required to identify the consequences of such an amendment to world food standards (*CMAJ* 2010;82:426, doi:10.1503/cmaj.109-3185).

Could getting your tubes tied benefit your sex life? An Australian study of 2721 women concluded that a lack of interest in sex was less common among those who'd undergone tubal ligation than in those who had not. After correction for age and other sociodemographic differences, the study also found that sterilised women were significantly more likely to have high levels of sexual satisfaction, relationship satisfaction, and sexual pleasure than non-sterilised women. They were also less likely to take "too long" to reach orgasm and to experience vaginal dryness during sex (*BJOG* 2010;117:463-8, doi:10.1111/j.1471-0528.2009.02469).

A retrospective case review showed that life without a cerebellum can be "normal." A man who died of heart disease aged 76 in 1939 was incidentally found at autopsy to have absent cerebellar hemispheres, dentate nuclei, inferior olive, and pons. He had worked all his life as a manual labourer and led a symptom free existence. Although he developed minor motor problems in the last nine years of his life, it is unknown whether the problems were caused by cerebellar agenesis from birth or by neurological deterioration later in life (*Brain* 2010;133:941-4, doi:10.1093/brain/awq030).

Are the outcomes of patients in intensive care units affected by how easily they're seen from the central nursing station? Among 654 patients admitted to one unit, the answer was no for overall hospital mortality. But severely ill patients had significantly higher hospital mortality rates when admitted to a poorly visible room than those admitted to highly visible rooms. Intensive care mortality rates revealed a similar pattern. The authors conclude that architectural design of healthcare facilities can influence patient outcomes (*Chest* 2010;137:1022-7 doi:10.1378/chest.09-1458).

Athletes participating in shorter distance triathlons have lower rates of injury and relatively minor injuries compared with those who take part in longer ones—but medical teams should not be complacent. Data collated from over 10 000 triathlon athletes in Australia found that 2.3% of participants who started racing sought medical help. Most injuries occurred during the running and cycling components of the races, and lower limb injuries and abrasions were the most common site and nature. Young competitors were injured more than the rest (*American Journal of Sports Medicine* 2010;38:1007-14, doi:10.1177/0363546509356979).

Empathy on the go? Use of oxytocin, a neuropeptide primarily released during birth and breast feeding, might help men with cognitive and mood disorders. A randomised, controlled study in 48 healthy men showed that intranasal oxytocin increased their emotional empathy in response to pictures designed to elicit positive and negative reactions. The hormone also improved their performance in a learning task when social reinforcement, in the form of images of smiling or angry faces, was provided in response to answers. The authors suggest that people with schizophrenia, psychopathy, and autism could benefit (*Journal of Neuroscience* 2010;30:4999-5007, doi:10.1523/JNEUROSCI.5538-09.2010).

A cardiothoracic mishap—right phrenic nerve injury—is a rare but known complication of triple bypass surgery and can cause breathing difficulties. A man who had increasing shortness of breath after bypass surgery made a negligence claim against the surgeon that was successfully defended. The defence was based on the fact that although this injury is known about and had occurred, the patient's poorer heart function post-operatively was the likely cause of his breathlessness. Chest fluoroscopy confirmed a dyskinetic left ventricle as well as paralysis of his right hemi-diaphragm (*Case Reports* 2010;18, www.medicalprotection.org/uk/casebook-january-2010/case-reports/living-up-to-expectations).

Before the next influenza pandemic takes hold, an editorial in *Nature* argues that everyone should be vaccinated with a cocktail of likely strains as a cheap, practical, and equitable method of protection (2010;465:161, doi:10.1038/465161a). The author, an employee of a pharmaceutical company with a vested interest, suggests that this strategy could "limit the spread of the virus in the early stages of a pandemic and significantly reduce the peak demand for vaccine." The current approach leaves 80% of the world's population unprotected, mostly in developing countries.

A protein that contributes to the development of lung injury induced by cigarette smoke is described in *Nature Medicine* (2010; published online 16 May, doi:10.1038/nm.2157). Rtp801 enhances cell death through oxidation dependent stress and could be a new therapeutic target against emphysema. Scientists found it was overexpressed in human emphysematous lungs and in the lungs of mice exposed to cigarette smoke. Mice with the Rtp801 gene knocked out were protected against acute and chronic lung injury and emphysema induced by cigarette smoke.

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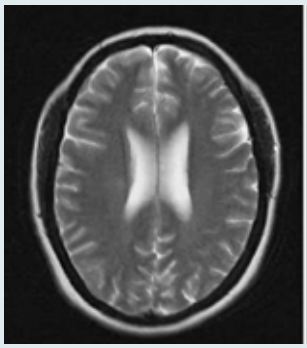

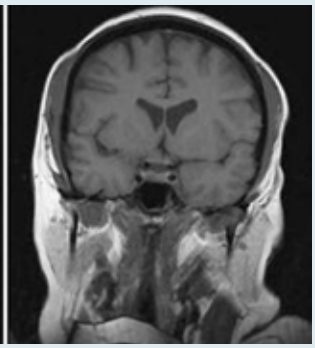

A 45 year old woman presented with bifrontal tension type headaches. They occurred daily but were worse on waking. She described "head swelling" when the pain was severe. Neurological examination was normal but scalp palpation revealed bitemporal swellings. Magnetic resonance brain imaging showed massive hypertrophy of the temporalis and masseter muscles bilaterally. She admitted that she ground her teeth and was referred to the dental hospital for a mouth guard. Specific treatment for tension type headache caused by temporalis muscle hypertrophy includes local injection of botulinum toxin to reduce pain and improve cosmetic appearance by reducing muscle bulk. Debulking surgery is another option.

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Patient consent obtained.

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