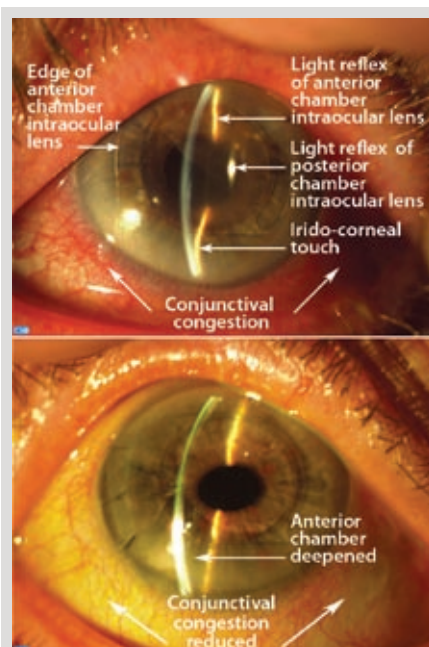


Fibroids develop in different ways depending on whether women are black or white. A study that tracked fibroid growth using magnetic resonance imaging over one year found that each of 262 fibroids from 38 black and 34 white women grew at their own rate and that big fibroids don't necessarily mean fast growth. For women under 35, fibroid growth rates were similar for black and white women; after 35, growth rates slowed down in white women but not in black women (*Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* published online 1 December 2008, doi:10.1073/pnas.0808188105).

A programme aimed at reducing musculoskeletal disorders in kitchen workers sadly made little difference to their perceived physical workload or to the number of musculoskeletal disorders they experienced (*Occupational and Environmental Medicine* 2008;65:849-56, doi:10.1136/oem.2007.034579). 504 kitchen workers were allocated to the intervention or control groups, and 402 ergonomic changes were made. The main outcome measures included pain at seven anatomical sites, fatigue after work, and sick leave due to musculoskeletal problems. The researchers conclude that individual workers' physical and mental resources may play a more important role than the environment.

Birthplace seems to be more crucial than ethnicity alone when it comes to poor eating patterns, according to the *Journal of Nutrition* (2008;138:2428-35, <http://jn.nutrition.org/cgi/content/full/138/12/2428>). Hispanic and Latino adults living in the US, but born elsewhere, consume more energy from legumes, fruit, and low-fat, high-fibre breads than their US born counterparts. They also gain less energy from fast food snacks and desserts. The authors conclude that interventions designed to improve diet induced health inequalities are best targeted within the Hispanic community living in the US.

The *BMJ* is not as "sensitive" to the wishes of older people as we hope to be. The frequency of use of the descriptors "elderly," and the preferred "older," in the titles and abstracts of eight general medical and gerontological journals were tallied from January 1996 to January 2007. The *Lancet* had a ratio of 6.3 and the *NEJM* a ratio of 3.7. The *BMJ* and *JAMA* both had a ratio of 2.6. Only one of the specialist journals seemed attentive to the demands



A 70 year woman developed acute glaucoma four months after cataract surgery. Surgery had been done primarily to aid her vision, which was failing due to age related macular degeneration. A biconcave high minus-power intraocular lens had been implanted in the capsular bag and a biconvex high plus-power intraocular lens in the anterior chamber, reproducing an intraocular telescope that gives 30% image magnification. After bilateral surgery, vision remained 1/60. However, the plus-power lens blocked the flow of aqueous through the pupil, pushing the iris forward and causing angle closure glaucoma (top). A laser peripheral iridotomy was needed to control the acute attack of glaucoma (bottom).

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of its target patient group—the *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* (in which the letter was published) obtained the lowest ratio of 0.5 (2008;56:1983, doi:10.1111/j.1532-5415.2008.01913.x).

Oxygen saturation falls significantly in the crew and passengers of commercial aircraft cabins and this may affect the performance of athletes who travel on long haul flights. The physiological effects of reduced cabin pressure seem similar to those induced

during "acclimatisation" training, so athletes who are advised to arrive before a competition to adjust to the altitude at their destination may have already adjusted during their flight. The optimum time of arrival for athletes may need to be reconsidered (*BJSM* 2008;42:577-81, doi:10.1136/bjism.2007.042960).

One lesser known, but dramatic, benefit of higher education is its capacity to slow population growth. A population expert writing in *Nature* (2008;456:572-3, doi:10.1038/456572a) says that a fertility difference of one child per woman between now and 2050 could make a difference of three billion to the higher estimate of 10.8 billion made by the United Nations Population Division. In many developing countries, women who complete secondary education have on average at least one child fewer than women who only complete primary school.

Analysis of the content of Dutch non-fiction medical television programmes over the past 40 years revealed some interesting trends. The speaking time allotted to experts has gradually decreased, while the contribution of laypeople has increased. Less attention than before is now paid to the scientific origins of the story, and more time is given to the expression of emotion and tension by patients and relatives (*Public Understanding of Science* 2008;17:461-72, doi:10.1177/0963662506075352).

Can stress therapy improve male infertility? An Italian study examined the ejaculates of 20 psychologically stressed and infertile men and found that all of them showed increased sperm necrosis and apoptosis and reduced numbers of "healthy" sperm. Half of these men then underwent a stress therapy called "conveyor of modulating radiance," which seemed to reduce the frequency of sex chromosome abnormalities and increase the number of "healthy" sperm, although no significant decreases in sperm pathologies were noted. The treatment also reduced the men's subjective perception of stress (*Indian Journal of Medical Research* 2008;128:254-61, <http://icmr.nic.in/ijmr/ijmr.htm>).

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