



A 68 year old man was referred for assessment of a painful right leg
Try the picture quiz in
ENDGAMES, p 663

Efficiency savings could be made on bulk buying of surgical gloves—but there's little objective data comparing differences in cutaneous sensibility between competing brands. London surgeons tested two types of sterile glove from two providers using the outcome measures of cutaneous pressure threshold, and static and moving two point discrimination. No objective differences were demonstrated, although subjective preferences were noted. The researchers suggest that other untested factors may underlie these subjective differences and say that more sophisticated measurements of surgical performance should be adopted next time (*Annals of the Royal College of Surgeons of England* 2011;93:95-8, doi:10.1308/03588411X12851639108150).

As more prostate cancer is identified and a more favourable outcome is achieved, more men with prostate cancer are actually dying of other things. Two common causes of death are so called external causes and heart failure. External causes include fractures, accidents, suicide, and iatrogenic causes. A reduction in bone mineral density is a possible mechanism induced by androgen deprivation therapy or orchidectomy. Suicide is more common just after diagnosis and probably relates to emotional distress rather than treatment or cancer related mechanisms. Heart failure may be triggered by the metabolic effects of hormonal prostate cancer treatment (*Oncologist* 2011;16:175-81, doi:10.1634/theoncologist.2010-0338).

Myasthenia gravis is increasingly treated with radical thymectomy and robotic thoracoscopic surgery has been developed for mediastinal pathologies. A retrospective cohort study that compared robotic with traditional surgery for thymectomy revealed that robotic thoracoscopic thymectomy is associated with improved outcome and a significantly higher complete remission rate (*Journal of Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgery* 2011;141:673-7, doi:10.1016/j.jtcvs.2010.11.042).

Previous prenatal losses—miscarriages, stillbirths, and abortions—represent a significant predictor of prenatal depression and anxiety that often persists even after the subsequent birth of a healthy baby. Data from a longitudinal study of parents and children showed that the number of previous miscarriages and stillbirths significantly predicted symptoms of depression and anxiety in a subsequent pregnancy, and beyond, independent of key psychosocial and obstetric factors. Targeting



A 77 year old woman presented with an erythematous patch on the forearm of five years' duration, clinically suspicious of a Bowenoid actinic keratosis or a superficial basal cell carcinoma. Histology revealed an amelanotic in situ melanoma. Melanomas lacking clinically evident pigment are termed amelanotic. These lesions may be under-reported by patients and prioritised incorrectly by clinicians because they are great mimics of less serious skin lesions and do not conform to the ABCD rule for melanoma detection and monitoring: Asymmetric lesion with irregular Border, Colour change, and an increasing Diameter.

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women with previous prenatal loss may improve the health outcomes of women and their families (*British Journal of Psychiatry* 2011, doi:10.1192/bjp.bp.110.083105).

Smaller retinal arteriolar calibres are associated with hypertension, whereas larger venular calibres are associated with inflammation, cerebral hypoperfusion, and cerebrovascular disease. Does size relate to dementia in any way? Data from the Rotterdam study reveal that retinal venular widening is associated with an increased risk of vascular dementia—and fit with the mechanism that vascular dementia may reflect hypoperfusion and subsequent ischaemia (*Neurology* 2011;76:816-21, doi:10.1212/WNL.0b013e31820e7baa).

Breast feeding may offer subsequent protection against heart disease in adults, and low grade inflammation is associated with an increased risk of heart disease even in apparently healthy children. Endeavouring to decipher a link, a multicentre study collected data about duration of breast feeding for adolescents who had had a blood sample taken. Breast feeding was not significantly associated with any of the selected

inflammatory markers after adjusting for sex and other potential confounding factors. The findings suggest that any cardiovascular protection conferred by breast feeding is mediated by mechanisms other than inflammation (*Journal of Nutrition* 2011;141:411-7, doi:10.3945/jn.110.128249).

YouTube and other video sharing websites may propagate the risk of non-suicidal self injury in young people. Using YouTube's own search engine and the keywords "self-injury" and "self-harm" the 100 most viewed video clips were examined involving both live individuals and those that depicted photographs or other images. The top 100 had been viewed over two million times, and 80% were accessible to a general audience. The tone of the videos was largely factual or educational or melancholic. Explicit imagery was common (*Pediatrics* 2011;127:e552-7, doi:10.1542/peds.2010-2317).

Patients whose airways are likely to pose a challenge to anaesthetists may benefit from a "preoperative endoscopic airway examination" (PEAE). In this new study, 138 patients presenting for elective diagnostic or therapeutic airway procedures underwent a standard airway examination, a management plan was recorded, followed by a PEAE and a final airway management plan recorded and implemented. In 26% of this study group PEAE affected the initial planned airway management. Airway visualisation reduced the number of patients undergoing intubation while awake and also provided superior information about the airway architecture (*Anesthesia & Analgesia* 2011;112:602-7, doi:10.1213/ANE.0b013e3181fdcf1c).

What does it feel like when doctors become chief executives of NHS organisations? Interviews with 20 current and two former medical chief executives revealed that most were in their first chief executive post or had stepped down having held just one such post. The training and development they had accessed en route was highly variable. What they were positive about were the opportunities the role had given them to bring about organisational change on a bigger scale than had been possible through their clinical work. Insecurity were the downside (*Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine* 2011;104:113-9, doi:10.1258/jrsm.2011.110042).

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