



An 8 year old boy with worsening respiratory symptoms
Try the picture quiz in **ENDGAMES, p 245**

Denture cream clearly has its uses—but beware the rare cases in which the zinc it contains is absorbed excessively. Although rare, copper deficiency myeloneuropathy in association with hyperzincaemia has been attributed to chronic use of denture creams containing zinc. Some patients show signs of zinc overload with raised concentrations in urine, but normal levels in plasma, and this state can last years after they stop using the cream. Although misuse of denture cream is a possible cause, other factors—such as previous gastric surgery, malnutrition, and other malabsorption syndromes—may be at play (*Neurology* 2009;73:76, doi:10.1212/01.wnl.0000349696.89948.b7).

Users of psychiatric services were interviewed about the content and delivery of the undergraduate curriculum in psychiatry, to explore what they thought was important for medical students to learn. The interviewees were clearer about the attitudes they felt that students should convey than about the skills and knowledge that are needed. Those who develop student curriculums need to take the views of service users into account (*Psychiatric Bulletin* 2009;33:260-4, doi:10.1192/pb.bp.108.020727).

Data from 15 randomised controlled trials and observational studies of total knee replacement surgery were pooled in a meta-analysis—the results indicate that cemented implants survive better than uncemented ones, but joint function did not differ between the two groups. When data from the randomised trials alone were pooled, the difference in implant survival disappeared. Cemented fixation is cheaper and less technically challenging than uncemented fixation, and cement could create a barrier to polyethylene debris generated from the articular surface, preventing osteolysis and implant loosening (*Journal of Bone and Joint Surgery (Br)* 2009;91-B:889-95, doi:10.1302/0301-620X.91B7.21702).

Minerva secretly thought that fear was the reason cardiologists were so keen to keep patients who have undergone coronary stenting on as many antiplatelet agents as possible—but it seems she was being unfair. A study in *Circulation* reports that triple antiplatelet



A 62 year old woman with multiple sclerosis presented with a blue discoloration of her skin, thought to represent cyanosis. Blood carbon dioxide and methaemoglobin concentrations were normal, however, and effects of photosensitising drugs were excluded. History taking revealed the use of a kettle containing a silver filament to boil water, which she drank to help symptoms of ataxia and weakness, for the past five years. Her blood silver levels were several hundred times the normal range at 723.8 nmol/l (normal <2.8 nmol/l) in keeping with systemic argyrosis. Silver can be deposited in many tissues but has a strong predilection for mucous membranes and the retina.

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therapy seems to be better than dual antiplatelet therapy in patients with ST segment elevation myocardial infarction undergoing primary percutaneous coronary intervention with drug eluting stents (2009;119:3207-14, doi:10.1161/circulationaha.108.822791). In particular, older women and diabetic patients seemed to benefit most.

You've just taken off when a voice is heard over the tannoy, "this flight is a pilot led service: we delegate key jobs . . . The controls will shortly be handed over to Miss Jones . . . who has had some experience in air traffic control and has been specifically trained to take aircraft over the Channel. She will then hand over to the co-pilot's assistant for landing—he's partially trained but has received specific training to land the plane . . . unfortunately

the flying time directive means there isn't a pilot actually on board your flight today." The analogy serves to explain the current gap between how patients believe their care is being delivered and what is currently happening in the NHS (*Bulletin of the Royal College of Surgeons of England* 2009;7:228-9, doi:10.1308/147363505X38933).

Liquorice gargles as a way to ameliorate postoperative sore throat were put to the test in a prospective, randomised, single blind study (*Anesth Analg* 2009;109:77-81, doi:10.1213/ane.0b013e3181a6ad47). Participants gargled five minutes before anaesthesia. Both the incidence and severity of postoperative sore throat were reduced in the liquorice group compared with the water gargle group, except in terms of severity at rest (as opposed to when swallowing) at 24 hours, when the two groups were similar.

The phenomenon of rebound acid hypersecretion after withdrawal of proton pump inhibitors is well known. The question is, does it induce acid related symptoms, which could lead to dependency on these drugs? A randomised controlled trial in 120 healthy volunteers who took esomeprazole or placebo for eight weeks found no significant difference between the two groups in terms of gastrointestinal symptoms at baseline, but those in the treatment group were more symptomatic at week 10, when both groups were taking placebo (*Gastroenterology* 2009;137:80-7, doi:10.1053/j.gastro.2009.03.058).

Scientists have already worked out that smokers and non-smokers have genetically different lung cancers. Now they've discovered that profiles of microRNAs (a class of small, non-coding RNA molecules) differ between lung cancers in the two groups. A microRNA called miR-21 was significantly increased in lung cancers in both groups, and the presence of mutations in the *EGFR* gene (which are more common in non-smokers' lung cancers) further increased its levels. Blocking miR-21 in vitro resulted in lung cancer cells dying, suggesting that it could be a useful target for cancer treatments (*Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 2009; published online July 13, doi:10.1073/pnas.0905234106).

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