



Computed tomography of the heart
Try the anatomy quiz in ENDGAMES, p 1215

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A comparison of the effectiveness, safety, and acceptability of medical abortion at home as opposed to in a clinic is presented in the *Bulletin of the World Health Organization* (2011;89:360-70, doi:10.2471/BLT.10.084046). A systematic review involving nine prospective cohort studies found that home based medical abortion is safe under the conditions in place in the included studies, and found no differences between home and clinic with regard to effectiveness or acceptability across countries.

The financial burden of atrial fibrillation has been something of a mystery. An American study has now worked out on the basis of current age and sex specific prevalence data that the national incremental cost of atrial fibrillation is in the range \$6bn to \$26bn (*Circulation Cardiovascular Quality Outcomes* 2011;4:313-20, doi:10.1161/circoutcomes.110.958165). The total incremental cost of atrial fibrillation per patient was \$8705. The costs were based on insurance claims from people with a primary disease diagnosis and therefore may still be underestimates.

In rural Bangladesh 12.5% of newborns don't breathe immediately, and half of these need some form of resuscitation, according to *Pediatrics* (2011;127:e1182-90, doi:10.1542/peds.2010-0842). Using a low cost community surveillance system, researchers also identified that poor condition at five minutes carried a high mortality risk (20% mortality rate). Intrapartum deaths accounted for a third of all neonatal deaths.



A 20 year old woman horse rider presented with painful lesions on her outer thighs in the winter months for five years. Examination showed bilateral symmetrical erythematous indurated tender plaques on the lateral aspects of her thighs. Blood investigations, including a vasculitis screen, serum cryoglobulins, and cold agglutinins, were normal. Skin biopsy from the affected area showed features of pemphigus with lymphocytic vasculitis. Equestrian pemphigus occurs in female horse riders, affecting their buttocks or lateral thighs, with worsening symptoms in cold weather. Wearing warm loose clothes, avoidance of cold, and use of oral nifedipine or pentoxifylline may be helpful.

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Does oxygen therapy worsen hypercapnia in people with obesity associated hypoventilation, as it may do in people with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease? A randomised controlled crossover trial studied 24 patients with obesity associated hypoventilation who inhaled 100% oxygen or room air for 20 minutes on two separate days. Transcutaneous carbon dioxide tension, ventilation per minute, and the ratio of dead space volume to tidal volume were measured at the start and finish. Carbon dioxide concentrations were 5 mm Hg higher with oxygen than with room air, and three participants had to leave the study early owing to dangerous rises in carbon dioxide (*Chest* 2011;139:1018-24, doi:10.1378/chest.10-1280).

Traumatic experiences don't just affect the people who go through them; they may affect the lives of family members too. An evaluation of secondary post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms in the spouses of chemical warfare victims 20 years after the Iran-Iraq war shows higher rates of symptoms in husbands who were exposed than in control husbands, and also found higher rates of symptoms among the wives of men who were exposed to chemical warfare (*Psychiatrist* 2011;35:168-75, doi:10.1192/pb.bp.110.029587).

A feasibility trial of group outpatient visits for people with Parkinson's disease shows that the intervention doesn't confer a quality of life benefit on those involved. The 12 month "care delivery" trial was conducted on the basis of studies which have demonstrated that such an approach works well for individuals with other chronic conditions, such as diabetes. The 90 minute visits in this trial were led by a study physician, and included both patients and care givers (*Neurology* 2011;76:1542-7, doi:10.1212/wnl.0b013e3182194bad).

The mortality rate is lower within 30 days of elective surgery for abdominal aortic aneurysm in men randomised to an invitation for ultrasound screening compared with men in the control group whose aneurysms were detected incidentally. There were 18 deaths (2.4%) following elective surgery for 747 screen detected aneurysms compared with 28 deaths (6.1%) following elective repair of 459 incidentally detected aneurysms (*British Journal of Surgery* 2011;98:619-22, doi:10.1002/bjs.7464).

The surveillance of interval cancers provides a measure of the efficacy of breast screening. An Italian study of women with mammography-negative dense breasts concludes that including ultrasound as an adjunct screening method brings the rate of interval cancers down to a similar level to that seen in women with non-dense breasts. Their results support the implementation of a randomised trial of adjunct ultrasound in women with higher breast tissue density (*European Journal of Cancer* 2011;47:1021-6, doi:10.1016/j.ejca.2010.12.002).

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