



**A 23 year old with a four week history of an itchy ear that became painful**  
Try the picture quiz in **ENDGAMES, p701**

The real life experience of patients who undergo percutaneous coronary interventions after ST elevation myocardial infarction compares favourably with that of patients under study conditions. Patients who underwent routine interventions in the community had similar outcomes (including rates of death, re-infarction, and stroke) to those included in a landmark randomised trial published in 2003. Long term prognosis was the same whether procedures were done during or after hours, and whether or not patients had to be first transported to another centre (*Circulation: Cardiovascular Interventions* 2009; published online 18 Aug, doi:10.1161/circinterventions.108.845636).

Filipino teenagers say they obtain most of their information about love and sexuality from their friends, but their opinions come from their parents. Few, however, talk to their parents about love and sexuality, and about half of those surveyed were not aware that condoms are not 100% effective at preventing infection or pregnancy. Those who approved of pornography and sexism and who held erroneous views about condoms were more sexually experienced (*BMC Public Health* 2009;9:282, doi:10.1186/1471-2458-9-282).

Minerva was fortunate to belong to the era of loyal “firms” in hospital training, and didn’t suffer the isolation of working in “split-shifts” and not belonging to any consultant specialist in particular. The president of the Royal College of Surgeons of England is calling for the “firm” structure to be restored, for all surgical trainees to work with two consultants for elective and emergency work, and for each firm to have two trainees and some foundation year doctors. Shift work should be replaced by a maximum on-call frequency of one night in six (*Bulletin of the Royal College of Surgeons of England* 2009;91:258-9, doi:10.1308/147363509X470722).

Children diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukaemia and treated with dexamethasone do better than those treated with prednisolone, presumably in part because dexamethasone penetrates the central nervous system more effectively. But little is known about whether treatment with the steroid impairs the nervous system in the long term. Fortunately, a study of cognitive function in children almost 10 years after being randomised to receive either dexamethasone or prednisolone for childhood



A 70 year old British born man presented with a lifelong history of an indurated, violaceous erythematous plaque on the left cheek that had recently started to enlarge. Histopathology showed a non-caseating granuloma suggestive of sarcoid. In view of the unusual history, and his account of drinking unpasteurised milk from his uncle’s farm as a boy, another biopsy was sent for culture. *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* was isolated and lupus vulgaris diagnosed. Lupus vulgaris is the commonest form of adult cutaneous tuberculosis, with a rising incidence in developed countries, and it is an important differential diagnosis in patients with chronic cutaneous granulomatous disease. Treatment is with anti-tuberculosis therapy.

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Patient consent obtained.

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acute lymphoblastic leukaemia has found no meaningful differences between the groups (*Blood* 2009;114:1746-52, doi:10.1182/blood-2008-12-186502).

A new sign inherent to polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS) may have been identified. Brazilian gynaecologists looked at early markers of cardiovascular disease in young, non-obese women with PCOS. They found that 40 women with the syndrome showed changes in vascular elasticity even in the absence of the usual risk factors for heart disease, compared with healthy women matched for age and body mass index. Time will tell whether this marker reflects actual disease, and whether it should be recognised as an additional characteristic of PCOS (*Clinical Endocrinology* 2009;71:406-11 doi:10.1111/j.1365-2265.2008.03506.x).

The day of the culturally cohesive “clan” mentality is on the wane amongst senior management teams within the NHS, and the culture of “rational competition” has stepped up to the plate instead. Indeed, this has been the aim of UK government policy since 2002. The new strategy focuses on gaining resources by winning market share, and using competition to integrate work within each hospital. Data from 2001 to 2008 examined with a validated tool of culture measurement suggest that this shift has started to happen (*JRSM* 2009;102:332-6, doi:10.1258/jrsm.2009.090066).

A writer in *Addiction Research and Theory* (2009;17:446-9) likens society’s collective denial, dissociation, and failure to take appropriate action against global warming and the unsustainability of the world’s demand for energy to that of individuals with alcohol and other chemical dependencies. There are also parallels with the phenomenon of tolerance—speed, acceleration, and air conditioning are no longer luxuries but necessities. Withdrawal symptoms occur when reliable sources of energy cease, and the psychological and physical consequences are, he says, well documented.

Scientists have long been able to grow human stem cells from skin fibroblast cells, but a group in California have discovered that the process is quicker when adult fat cells are used. Fat cells can be easily isolated in “prodigious” quantities from adipose tissue, and when reprogrammed using an established genetic targeting method they generated stem cells much faster than did fibroblasts. The fat cells produced stem cells nearly twice as fast as the skin cells and about 20 times more efficiently (*Proceedings of the National Academy of Science* 2009; published online 8 Sept, doi:10.1073/pnas.0908450106).

The risky driving behaviour of youngsters and their perception of risk is strongly linked to the over-representation of young drivers in crashes involving casualties, and it is a substantial public health issue. Authors of a study in the *American Journal of Public Health* say that high scores on questionnaire items for risky driving were associated with a 50% increased risk of crashing (2009;99:1638-44, doi:10.2105/AJPH.2008.150367). They conclude that the whole system needs to be overhauled, including major licensing reform.

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