There’s a dearth of safety data about cosmetic labial surgery, and an increasing trend for healthy women requesting such surgery, with many citing sexual difficulties. But the surgery itself may damage the nerve supply and is associated with impaired sensitivity and impaired sexual function. A study in the *BJOG* found no prospective, randomised, or controlled trials for such surgery, and the authors say that the amount of genital tissue removed is comparable with type 1 and 2 female genital mutilation (2009; published online 11 November, doi:10.1111/j.1471-0528.2009.02426.x).

The development of human language remains a bit of a mystery; only one gene, known as *FOXP2*, has so far been implicated. Mutations in this gene lead to developmental disorders of speech and language. Scientists have discovered that the chimpanzee version of *FOXP2* is evolutionarily conserved but differs from the human version by just two amino acids. This small variation leads to a cascade of activity in humans, including activation of a whole lot of other genetic networks, potentially accounting for our ability to speak (*Nature* 2009;462:213-8, doi:10.1038/nature08549).

Do body weight and obesity have anything to do with the risk of stomach cancer? A Chinese meta-analysis of data from over three million people and nearly 9500 cases of gastric cancer concludes that overall excess body weight is associated with an increased risk of gastric cancer (odds ratio 1.06 to 1.41). The strength of the association concludes that overall excess body weight is associated with an increased risk of stomach cancer (odds ratio 1.22, 95% confidence interval 1.06 to 1.41). The development of human language remains a bit of a mystery; only one gene, known as *FOXP2*, has so far been implicated. Mutations in this gene lead to developmental disorders of speech and language. Scientists have discovered that the chimpanzee version of *FOXP2* is evolutionarily conserved but differs from the human version by just two amino acids. This small variation leads to a cascade of activity in humans, including activation of a whole lot of other genetic networks, potentially accounting for our ability to speak (*Nature* 2009;462:213-8, doi:10.1038/nature08549).

The emotional state of adolescents living with HIV acquired perinatally or later in life was explored in a US study of 13-21 year olds. Almost a third of them reported raised levels of “internalising” emotional problems, “externalised” behavioural problems, or overall symptoms consistent with clinical psychopathology. Greater internalising was linked with questioning about their own sexual identity, whereas greater externalising was linked with identifying as bisexual. Symptoms were unrelated to the mode of HIV acquisition. Almost a third of those with clinically significant scores had never received psychiatric care (*AIDS Care* 2009;21:1447-54, doi:10.1080/0954012090283085).

It’s not common to find retinal haemorrhages after babies convulse. In a prospective study, children up to the age of two years admitted with a diagnosis of a first convulsion were all examined by an experienced ophthalmologist using indirect ophthalmoscopy. Just two of 182 admitted (of the 389 seen in the emergency department) were found to have retinal haemorrhages. Both were eventually diagnosed as having been abused (*Archives of Disease in Childhood* 2009;94:873-5, doi:10.1136/adc.2007.132522).

Instead of matching donor samples of umbilical cord blood using human leukocyte antigens (HLA), which are inherited and expressed on the surfaces of immune cells, haematologists investigated matching based on non-inherited maternal antigens (NIMA), which are carried by mothers and exposed to fetuses in utero through cord blood. They found that patients who received cord blood transplants that were NIMA matched but HLA mismatched had better cell graft rates and lower transplant and any cause mortality than those that were not NIMA matched (*Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 2009; doi:10.1073/pnas.0910310106).

Minerva was not surprised to read that adherence to a dietary protocol that involved cocoa powder was excellent. The study explored the effect of cocoa powder on inflammatory markers in patients at high risk of cardiovascular disease. The authors found that cocoa polyphenols may indeed modulate inflammatory markers and offer protection against atherosclerosis (*American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* 2009;90:1144-50, doi:10.3945/ajcn.2009.27716).

In up to 10% of patients undergoing colonoscopy, the passage is blocked by tumours causing stenosis of the rectum or distal colon. For these patients an intraoperative scope is the only conventional alternative. An Italian team addressed this problem by using computed tomographic colonography to visualise the entire colon in patients with stenosing colorectal cancers. Forty-three such procedures identified four synchronous lesions in four patients; three of the lesions turned out to be small sessile polyps. They estimate that the method has a sensitivity of 83.7% (*Annals of Surgical Innovation and Research* 2009;3:11, doi:10.1186/1750-1164-3-11).

Patients at risk of osteoporosis are still not being picked up after fragility fractures. A large retrospective national cohort study from Korea reports that patients with wrist fractures are less likely to be evaluated and managed for osteoporosis than those with hip or spine fractures. The gap in care originates with the doctors responsible for the treatment of such fractures in the first place (*Journal of Bone and Joint Surgery (American volume)* 2009;91:2376-80, doi:10.2106/JBJS.H.01871).