



A limping 4 year old child
Try the picture quiz
in ENDGAMES, p 1427

Long term treatment with lithium may have beneficial effects on cognitive function. Forty five patients with amnesic mild cognitive impairment were randomised to receive lithium or placebo over 12 months in a double blind trial. Lithium was associated with a significant decrease in concentrations of phosphorylated-tau in the cerebrospinal fluid and better performance on the cognitive subscale of the Alzheimer's disease assessment score and in attention tasks. Tolerability was good and the adherence rate was 91% (*British Journal of Psychiatry* 2011;198:351-6, doi:10.1192/bjp.bp.110.080044).

A large systematic review of randomised trials examined the effect of supplementation with multiple micronutrients, compared with iron and folic acid supplements, on pregnancy outcomes in less developed countries. It reports that multiple micronutrient supplementation was more effective at reducing the risk of low birth weight and small size for gestational age. But it offered no overall effect on perinatal mortality, although further analyses suggested a lower risk of perinatal mortality in trials in which more than half the mothers had formal education, or when supplementation was started after 20 weeks' gestation (*Bulletin of the World Health Organization* 2011;89:402-411B, doi:10.2471/BLT.10.083758).

A functional magnetic resonance imaging study looked at the brain activity underlying trauma and coping in a group of police officers in Sao Paolo who had experienced a gunfire attack. Those without post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) showed increased medial prefrontal cortex activity and decreased amygdala activity during retrieval of traumatic memories. Those who had PTSD showed similar neural expressions after undergoing psychotherapy, along with a 37% reduction in symptoms. The findings suggest that psychotherapy helps to build resilience by weakening the sensory content of traumatic memories while strengthening them cognitively (*Journal of Psychiatric Research* 2011;45:727-34, doi:10.1016/j.jpsychires.2010.11.004).

The Bangladeshi public health system provides few services for common sexual and reproductive health problems such as vaginal discharge, fistula, prolapse, menstrual disorders, and urinary tract infections—and poor men and women tend to resort to informal providers instead of health professionals. Interviews with 303 providers and 312 women



A 65 year old man presented with longstanding discharge from the right ear and recent onset balance problems. Examination showed keratin debris in the pars flaccida (black arrow) and a positive "fistula sign." A computed tomography scan confirmed a large cholesteatoma (white arrowhead) with a dehiscent lateral semicircular canal (red arrowhead). A cholesteatoma is a cyst of squamous epithelium that grows into the middle ear. It can erode bone and produce intracranial complications. Erosion of the bony labyrinth can result in dizziness. A positive fistula sign (digital pressure to the tragus resulting in nystagmus and vertigo) is indicative of an abnormal communication with the inner ear.

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 Patient consent obtained.

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from rural and urban Bangladesh indicate that the treatments on offer rarely work. The huge, neglected domain of sexual and reproductive health needs is a source of "silent suffering" for which there are no trained health staff providing treatment in government facilities (*Reproductive Health Matters* 2011;19:21-31, www.rhmjournal.org.uk).

A three year oral history project commissioned by the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine culminates this month in the publication of the stories of 62 British men who were prisoners of war in the far East during the second world war, now all in their 90s. The school was involved not only in treating the tropical diseases they'd contracted during captivity but also more recently in helping manage some of the longer term after effects of their experiences. For more information go to www.captivememories.org.uk.

The cost of cancer drugs everywhere is under scrutiny. A paper from a South African team suggests that instead of government mandated price cuts, a better alternative would be a price based on drug performance, cost effectiveness, and a country's ability to pay (*European Journal of Cancer* 2011;47:1299-1304, doi:10.1016/j.ejca.2011.03.015). To illustrate their idea, they've developed a global pricing index for new cancer drugs in patients with metastatic colorectal cancer. Higher survival benefits were associated with higher drug prices, especially in higher income countries such as Canada and Norway.

Do "dietary approaches to stop hypertension" (DASH) diets improve cardiovascular risk factors among patients with type 2 diabetes? Yes, says a study investigating the effect of DASH eating patterns (rich in fruit, vegetables, whole grains, low fat dairy products and low in saturated fat, total fat cholesterol, refined grains, and sweets) on C reactive protein, coagulation abnormalities, and liver function (*Journal of Nutrition* 2011;141:1083-8, doi:10.3945/jn.110.136739). Compared with a control group on a standard diet for diabetes, the DASH diet resulted in significant reductions in concentrations of C reactive protein, alanine and aspartate aminotransferase, and plasma fibrinogen.

A study of patients on ventilation with early acute respiratory distress syndrome reports that the combination of putting patients in the prone position and administering oxygen at 45 cm H₂O "extended sigh" airway pressure resulted in improved oxygenation. Use of the manoeuvre and the prone position together reduced the risk of ventilation induced lung injury and did not cause any major clinical side-effects (*Critical Care* 2011;15:R125, doi:10.1186/cc10235). Staying longer in the prone position may be advantageous, but this has yet to be demonstrated.

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