



Kidney failure with a diagnostic chest radiograph

Try the picture quiz in **ENDGAMES**, p 48

Warm weather exacerbates the symptoms of multiple sclerosis. A cross sectional analysis in *Neurology* investigated whether there was any association between outdoor temperature and cognitive status (2012;78:964-8, doi:10.1212/WNL.0b013e31824d5834). Warmer temperatures on the day of testing were related to worse cognitive status among 40 patients with multiple sclerosis, but not in 40 controls. And over time, in another 45 patients with multiple sclerosis, increased outdoor temperature between baseline and follow-up six months later was related to a decline in cognitive status.

In a trial of exenatide in patients with inadequately controlled type 2 diabetes, a subgroup of 17 patients received the drug in addition to insulin, which goes against current UK guidelines. This group of patients experienced greater weight loss than did the exenatide only group, but their glycated haemoglobin was slightly higher at six months (*QJM* 2012;105:321-6, doi:10.1093/qjmed/hcr180).

Blood transfusions adversely affect survival from lung cancer, and this effect is thought to be due to immune modulation by the leucocytes in donor blood. To find out whether leucocyte depleted blood has a similar effect, a US team compared patients with non-small cell lung cancer who received leucocyte depleted blood with those receiving no transfusion. They assessed 361 patients over eight years, stratified by cancer stage. Disease-free survival and overall survival were worse in patients receiving leucocyte depleted blood (*Journal of Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgery* 2012;143:815-9, doi:10.1016/j.jtcvs.2011.12.031).

Bisphenol A is an endocrine disrupting chemical widely used in food and drink packaging. Higher urinary concentrations of bisphenol A were associated with heart disease in recent US nutrition surveys, independent of traditional cardiac risk factors. A UK study involving 758 cases of incident coronary artery disease and 861 controls reports that associations between higher bisphenol A exposure (indicated by higher urinary concentrations) and incident heart disease over 10 years showed similar trends to those seen in the more highly exposed respondents in the United States. The underlying mechanisms are unknown (*Circulation* 2012;125:1482-90, doi:10.1161/circulationaha.111.069153).



Larva currens is characterised by a creeping erythematous, intensely pruritic eruption. It progresses rapidly and is caused by penetration and migration of larval forms of nematodes, commonly the roundworms of *Strongyloides stercoralis* (human and cattle) and *Gnathostoma spingiera* (cat, dog, or pig). Eggs contained in the faeces in soil hatch to produce larvae, which penetrate skin. Humans are accidental hosts. Skin markings result from hypersensitivity to the worms. Sunbathers, fishermen, swimmers, gardeners, construction workers, and travellers are all at risk. The condition responds to albendazole.

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Urological robotics have leapt in popularity, despite the greater cost than laparoscopic and open surgical approaches. Both robotics and laparoscopy reduce blood loss and hospital stay, and robotic procedures have better short term results for postoperative outcomes such as continence and sexual function. A systematic review of robotics concludes that the current high excess cost of using robotics should be compensated for by shorter training of surgeons, and that set-up and maintenance costs may drop with competition from manufacturers (*BJU* 2012, doi:10.1111/j.1464-410X.2012.11015.x).

In an age where patient preferences dominate the NHS, here's a report from one centre that succeeded in making patients happy while also improving use of outpatient clinics. A "virtual" inflammatory bowel disease clinic serves consenting patients with established disease

who have been stable for more than one year, and who do not have primary sclerosing cholangitis. It is popular with patients but depends on a well maintained database, good integration of computer systems, and a committed clerical and specialist nurse team to work safely (*Frontline Gastroenterology* 2012;3:76-80, doi:10.1136/flgastro-2012-100123).

Epileptic seizures associated with central nervous system (CNS) infections take a different clinical course than seizures with non-infectious causes. An analysis of 81 children with a history of CNS infections found that half of them had experienced at least one seizure, and 22 had status epilepticus. The intubation rate was significantly higher among those with CNS infections than among those with seizures with a different cause, and the post-ictal period was at least eight times longer in those with CNS infections than in children with febrile convulsions (*Developmental Medicine and Child Neurology* 2012;54:324-7, doi:10.1111/j.1469-8749.2012.04227).

Health professionals are good at assessing smoking status for new patients who attend cancer clinics—but beyond this first visit, they may not be taking advantage of this "teachable moment" to provide help with smoking cessation. Patients with cancer who continue to smoke after diagnosis increase their risk of treatment complications, reduce the efficacy of their treatment, and often die earlier. The researchers suggest installing smoking cessation interventions within oncology outpatient clinics (*The Oncologist* 2012;17:455-62, doi:10.1634/theoncologist.2011-0350).

Researchers assessed 276 healthy people for chronic psychological stress, defined as a non-health related life experience that imposed moderate to long term stress. The participants were exposed to common cold viruses and quarantined. The immune cells of those exposed to stress were less sensitive to hormones that usually stop inflammatory responses, compared with the immune cells of those who were not classified as stressed. The researchers concluded that prolonged stress interfered with the regulation of inflammation, potentially affecting the onset and progression of a wide range of diseases (*Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences USA* 2012, doi:10.1073/pnas.1118355109).

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