



A reticulated eruption on the lower abdomen in a 17 year old girl

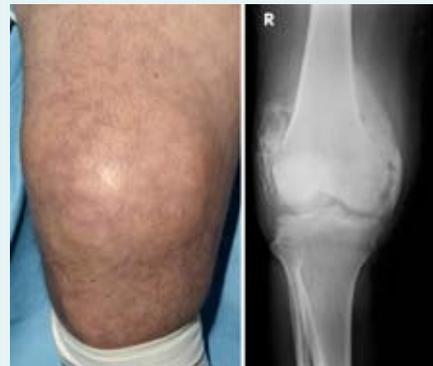
Try the picture quiz in ENDGAMES, p 48

Fetal genome sequencing looking for genetic diseases can now use genetic material circulating in the mother's blood, without the need for knowledge of the father's genes. Scientists were able to apply a chromosome counting technique to identify the individual parental chromosomes transmitted to the fetus without any paternal information, unlike other techniques that are also more invasive and pose some risk to the fetus and mother (*Nature* 2012, doi:10.1038/nature11251).

Patellar fractures can occur spontaneously after the resurfacing that is part of total knee replacement surgery. A case-control study designed to identify which patients might be at increased risk of fractures identified age over 70 years at the time of surgery as a common risk factor. Patella fracture was also strongly associated with the number of previous knee operations, greater mechanical misalignment before surgery, shorter patellar tendon length after surgery, and a thinner patellar thickness after resection (*Journal of Bone and Joint Surgery* 2012;94B:908-13, doi:10.1302/0301-620X.94B7.28552).

There is no association between the presence of risk factors for prostate cancer and whether men think they are at risk. An analysis of men diagnosed with prostate cancer found that older men and those with a family history of the disease did not think they were at an increased risk of cancer (*British Journal of Urology International* 2012, doi:10.1111/j.1464-410X.2012.11316.x). Tests for prostate specific antigen were not requested by men at increased risk, but by men who were more likely to be affluent, have low grade tumours, and have friends with prostate cancer.

The age based dosing guidelines for paracetamol in the *British National Formulary for Children* could risk overdosing underweight children. A comparison of the current dosing system with one proposed by the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Authority (MHRA) has found that the MHRA guidelines are effective at reducing the risk of paracetamol overdose, because all children of any weight receive doses just above or within the recommended dose range (*Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine* 2012;105:263-9, doi:10.1258/jrsm.2012.110330).



A 58 year old patient in long term intensive care with lower limb neurological deficit (due to an epidural and psoas abscess) developed a painful swollen knee. Radiographic imaging showed calcification of the surrounding musculature, confirming neurogenic heterotopic ossification. This benign condition involves bone formation and not merely calcification in soft tissues. As well as limiting mobility, it can cause pressure sores and nerve entrapment. Although the condition has been reported after head and spinal injuries, it might also occur after prolonged neuromuscular blockade. Inflammatory and neurohumoral factors might contribute to pathogenesis.

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Patient consent obtained.

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Yet another non-role for omega 3 fatty acids. In a high powered, randomised placebo controlled trial, researchers investigated whether these fatty acids might cut the risk of supraventricular arrhythmias after cardiac surgery because of their possible anti-arrhythmic properties. However, oral supplementation of n3-polyunsaturated fatty acids, begun two days before coronary artery bypass grafting, did not reduce atrial fibrillation or other complications after surgery (*Journal of the American Heart Association* 2012, doi:10.1161/JAHA.111.000547).

Do young children eat less at mealtimes when free to serve themselves? Yes, researchers hypothesised. However, those children who were allowed to help themselves tended to take more food and eat larger portions

than those given ready filled plates of food. Perhaps not surprisingly, researchers found those children who took bigger starters tended to be overweight and take larger main courses (*American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* 2012;96:36-43, doi:10.3945/ajcn.112.035261).

A Danish study examined whether statins could modify the effectiveness of clopidogrel at reducing the number of major adverse cardiovascular events (MACE) within 12 months of coronary stent implantation. MACE rates were 104 per 1000 person years for clopidogrel and statins used together, 130 for clopidogrel alone, 108 for statins alone, and 446 for neither drug used. Statin use versus non-use was not associated with an increased MACE risk in patients using clopidogrel after coronary stent insertion (*British Journal of Clinical Pharmacology* 2012;74:161-70, doi:10.1111/j.1365-2125.2012.04169.x).

A study of nasal ciliary function in people with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) has confirmed that the condition involves nasal dysfunction, not just poor lung function. Researchers assessed ciliary function by measuring ciliary beat frequency with high speed digital imaging, both before and after ciliary perfusion with drug treatment for COPD. Beat frequency was substantially lower in patients with moderate and severe COPD than in patients at risk and controls. Beat frequency rose persistently with almost all the drugs tested in COPD cilia (*Respiratory Medicine* 2012;106:1139-47, doi:10.1016/j.rmed.2012.04.001).

Use of live social contact can reduce mental health stigma—but filmed social contact could be just as effective and cheaper. Researchers compared the effectiveness of a DVD, a live presentation, and a lecture on changes in attitudes, emotional reactions, intended proximity, and knowledge immediately after the intervention and four months later. On most measures, no differences were seen between the DVD and live groups. The DVD intervention was the most cost effective, and the live session was the most popular (*British Journal of Psychiatry* 2012;201:7-8, doi:10.1192/bjp.bp.111.093120).

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