



An unusual case of pneumonia

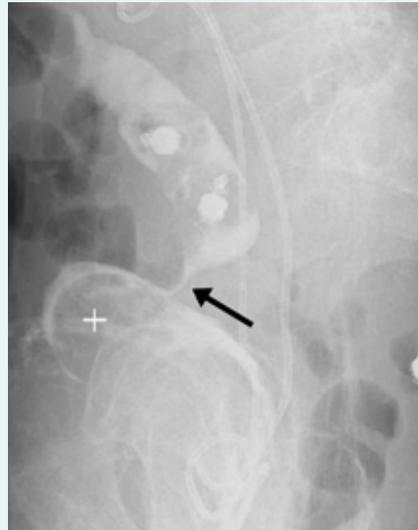
Try the picture quiz in ENDGAMES, p 50

Get ready now for the Hajj—October is approaching. More than nine million religious visas are issued each year for Islamic pilgrims heading to Mecca and with daytime temperatures reaching up to 45°C, spread of infection, dehydration, diarrhoea, and sunburn are all high on the risk list. A leaflet produced by the Royal College of General Practitioners and others urges pilgrims to take the meningococcal vaccine; avoid unlicensed barbers who may spread hepatitis B, C, and HIV; and carry good quality insect repellent, hand gels, and bottled water (www.mcb-vac.co.uk).

Children with venous thromboembolism (VTE) are screened for inherited thrombophilia, but should the screening stop there? A German study tested 533 first and second degree relatives of 206 children with VTE for inherited thrombophilia (*Blood* 2012;120:1510-5). The incidence of VTE was high (2.82%) among family members found to be carriers of antithrombin, protein C or protein S deficiency, compared with carriers of other clotting factors. The team concluded that screening for these three forms of hereditary thrombophilia be routinely undertaken in children with VTE and their relatives.

Economic difficulties have been retrospectively associated with population increases in psychological distress (PD). A US study adopted a non-traditional measure of PD—monitoring searches on the internet for queries about anxiety, stress, and other types of PD in 2004-10 (*Journal of Affective Disorders* 2012, doi:10.1016/j.jad.2012.05.005). A 1% increase in mortgage delinquencies (lack of agreed payments) and foreclosures (homes seized by loan providers) was associated with a 16% increase in PD queries after one month and an 11% increase after four months. Unemployment and underemployment had similar but less intense associations.

Extracorporeal shockwave lithotripsy is effective at treating renal stones in children and is safe in the short term—but what about the long term effects? In a study of 70 children followed for over two years, none developed hypertension or diabetes (*British Journal of Urology International* 2012, doi:10.1111/j.1464-410X.2012.11420.x). Of the treated kidneys examined by ultrasonography, only one treated kidney was smaller than expected for a similarly aged child—in this instance, a stone had been found in the pelvic ureter three years after lithotripsy.



A 77 year old woman presented with the passage of faecal matter per urethra. Cystography showed a fistula tract (black arrow) between the bladder (white cross) and small bowel, and several capsules for wireless endoscopy. Two devices were caught at the site of the fistula, and a third passed into the distal colon. She had failed to mention previous investigations at different hospitals for iron deficiency anaemia. Previous treatment for cervical cancer resulted in radiation enteritis, reportedly a risk factor for capsule retention.

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Patient consent obtained.

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Soldiers returning from Afghanistan with exposure to combat stress have persistent negative effects on their brain circuitry relating to social and occupational cognition. Using neuropsychological testing and functional magnetic resonance imaging, researchers compared brain changes linked to executive functions (attention and working memory for planning and decision making) in 33 peacekeeping soldiers with those in 26 never deployed soldiers (*Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 2012, doi:10.1073/pnas.1206330109). The observed changes reversed 18 months later, but functional connections persisted between the midbrain and prefrontal cortex.

Hot cocoa gets Minerva to sleep, but she could enjoy other benefits. A double blind study randomised 90 elderly people with mild cognitive impairment to have one daily cocoa drink containing 990 mg, 520 mg, or 45 mg of flavanol, for eight weeks. Although the minimal state examination was similar across the groups, the time taken to complete other cognitive tests was significantly lower in the high and intermediate flavanol groups than in the low group. Verbal fluency was also significantly better in the high flavanol group (*Hypertension* 2012;60:794-801).

A systematic review of insecticide treated nets for malaria control and how they are delivered to malaria endemic areas reports that many delivery strategies involve subsidies from health sector organisations (such as antenatal care clinics and health campaigns) and partial subsidies from retail outlets (*Bulletin of the World Health Organization* 2012;90:672-84E). Health campaigns offering free nets achieved the highest net ownership among households with children younger than five years. The most common barriers to net delivery were cost, lack of stock, and poor logistics.

Do substance abuse and psychological distress predict prolonged opioid use after surgery? A prospective longitudinal cohort study over two years found that preoperative factors—including legitimately prescribed opioid use, self perceived risk of addiction, and symptoms of depression—each independently predicted more prolonged opioid use after major surgery. Each of these factors was a better predictor of prolonged opioid use than postoperative pain duration or severity (*Anesthesia and Analgesia* 2012;115:694-702).

Physical and sexual abuse in childhood is a predictor of early onset cardiovascular events in women. The association of child abuse with myocardial infarction and stroke was examined in nearly 67 000 women from the Nurses' Health Study 2 (*Circulation* 2012;126:920-7). After adjusting for age, race, childhood body type, parental education, and family cardiovascular history, the 17% of women who had experienced severe childhood abuse had a 46-56% higher risk of cardiovascular events in early adulthood than those with no history of abuse.

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