Qualits’ eggs are being used to train juniors in endoscopic endonasal surgery. Slow boiled eggs are embedded in the orbit or attached to the lateral wall of the maxillary sinus in a physical sinus model created from synthetic materials. The stiffness of the eggshell membrane acts as the periortib. Surgical procedure testing determined that eggshell resection involving inaccurate drilling or peeling with curettes can rupture the eggshell membrane, which in turn leads to protrusion of egg white—mimicking extrusion of orbital fat from periortibial injury (Laryngoscope 2012;122:2154-7, doi:10.1002/lary.23399).

Most of the older population in the United Kingdom cannot cross a pedestrian crossing in the time required (Age and Ageing 2012;41:690-4, doi:10.1093/ageing/afs076). The walking speed of 3145 adults older than 65 years was assessed by a timed walk of eight feet at their normal pace. Researchers found that 84% of men and 93% of women walked slower than 1.2 m/s, the speed required for safe crossing. This assumed “normal walking” speed for pedestrian crossings could be unrealistic for older people.

Smokeless tobacco products including hookah (water pipe) and nass chewing seem to be as risky as cigarette smoking when it comes to squamous cell cancer of the oesophagus. Indian researchers did a case-control study of 702 confirmed cases and 1663 hospital based controls matched for age, sex, and residential district reports. They found that 84% of men and 93% of women walked slower than 1.2 m/s, the speed required for safe crossing. This assumed “normal walking” speed for pedestrian crossings could be unrealistic for older people.

Boiling and then storing household water in a covered container is effective in reducing Escherichia coli in drinking water in Cambodia. In a longitudinal study of 60 randomly selected homes over six months in one province, 90% of households used boiling to treat water. But only an average of 31% of these homes had boiled water to hand at follow-up. Of 369 matched samples of boiled and untreated water, 44% of boiled samples were free of E coli, compared with 5% of untreated samples (American Journal of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene 2012;87:394-8, doi:10.4269/ajtmh.2012.11-0715).

Applying hyoscine at the caecum to cut colon spasm could help detect polyps.

Minerva wonders whether the complexity of assisted reproductive technology explains the increased risk of adverse obstetric and perinatal outcomes, or whether it is the women’s infertility itself. A large Japanese cohort study points the finger at infertility. Nearly 250 000 women with singleton pregnancies were divided according to the type of procedure used. Regardless of the procedure, there was an increased incidence of placenta praevia, preterm delivery, and infants with low birth weight, and a decreased incidence of spontaneous cephalic delivery (Fertility and Sterility 2012;98:922-8, doi:10.1016/j.fertnstert.2012.05.049).

β blockers could offer a survival benefit to patients with significant sepsis. An Italian team analysed data from patients admitted to critical care units with sepsis, looking specifically at the differences between those who had previously been prescribed β blocker therapy and those who had not. Of almost 9500 patients older than 40 years, 11.2% had previously been prescribed β blockers; this group enjoyed a lower mortality rate at 28 days than those previously unexposed to β blockers (17.7% v 22.1%, odds ratio 0.78 (95% confidence interval 0.66 to 0.93); Critical Care Medicine 2012;40:2768-72, doi:10.1097/CCM.0b013e31825b9509).

The demand for transplantable organs exceeds supply. A surgical intensive care unit in the United States introduced new quality measures to improve the organ retrieval process. The process had three sequential steps: targeted donor identification, conversion of potential donors to actual donors, and organ protection during procurement. Organ protection led to an increased number of organs transplanted per donor and improved recovery of hearts and lungs despite increasing donor age. The three quality measures were introduced successfully elsewhere in the same organ procurement region (Injury 2012;43:1805-10, doi:10.1016/j.injury.2012.08.012).

How often is work to blame for headaches? Norwegian researchers collected data over two years from 6421 employees at baseline and 3574 at follow-up. Seven of 16 separate psychological, social, and mechanical factors were prospectively related to headache severity. The most significant factors linked to severity of pain were higher quantitative demands and role conflict, and lower decision control, control over work intensity, and job satisfaction (Pain 2012;153:2119-32, doi:10.1016/j.pain.2012.07.009).

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A 31 year old woman who was 11 weeks pregnant presented with sudden loss of vision in her left eye, which occurred after a typical migraine headache with a visual aura. However, the visual aura persisted and remained as a central scotoma. Visual acuity was 6/6 on the left and 6/60 on the right. Medical investigation, which included an echocardiogram, revealed a patent foramen ovale. A patent foramen ovale is a recognised cause of a right to left shunt, which is a risk factor for an ischaemic event secondary to a paradoxical embolus.

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Patient consent obtained.

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