

MINERVA

Send comments or suggest ideas to Minerva: minerva@bmj.com



Coronal ultrasound anatomy of a normal hip in a newborn baby

Try the picture quiz in [ENDGAMES](#), p 40

The “creation of monsters” is the argument against in vitro fertilisation (IVF) in Poland. The Catholic Church in Poland seeks to criminalise IVF, and has at the heart of its campaign the claim that children created by IVF are embodiments of “the other,” just like Frankenstein’s monster (*Reproductive Health Matters* 2012;20:30-7, doi:10.1016/S0968-8080(12)40647-4). Monstrosity is attributed to IVF children in several ways: the physical (potential deformities), psychological (survivor syndrome or identity crises), social (loneliness, uncertain place within families), and ethical (lives burdened by the deaths of many embryos).

Courage is a much needed commodity in medicine, and few have shown it with such persistence as Peter Wilmshurst. Always ready to speak out against wrongdoing whatever the personal cost, he endured a lengthy lawsuit after highlighting research misconduct at the company whose device he was evaluating (*BMJ* 2011;342:d2646, doi:10.1136/bmj.d2646; *BMJ* 2012;344:e2226, doi:10.1136/bmj.e2226). Last year he emerged triumphant, and Minerva is pleased to report that at the *BMJ*’s Christmas party he was presented with the first ever *BMJ* Editor’s Award, “for courage and persistence in speaking truth to power.”

A nurse led, telephone support programme designed to help patients with a history of stroke to manage their blood pressure has proved no better than usual care. In this community based, randomised controlled study, the intervention group (n=187) was trained to use a blood pressure monitor and received ongoing telephone support. Over 12 months, systolic blood pressures did not fall in the intervention group, despite more patients in this group changing their blood pressure treatment than those in the control group (*CMAJ* 2013,185:23-31, doi:10.1503/cmaj.120832).

In the ASEPSIS trial, researchers looked at whether the acute use of atorvastatin reduces the severity of infection in ward patients (*Critical Care* 2012;16:R231, doi:10.1186/cc11895). Patients with sepsis (n=100) were randomised to 40 mg atorvastatin daily or placebo throughout their hospital stay, up to 28 days. The intervention group had significantly lower conversion rates to severe sepsis than the placebo group (4% v 24%



A 46 year old man developed a well defined area of erythema and blistering on his right upper arm after abdominal surgery. The rash failed to respond to antibiotics, but quickly resolved after using potent topical corticosteroids. Patch testing showed a strongly positive reaction to benzalkonium chloride, a common disinfectant used to clean blood pressure cuffs in hospital theatres. Allergic contact dermatitis presents with a well defined area of erythema, scale, and sometimes blistering at the contact site. Intense reactions may be misdiagnosed as erysipelas or cellulitis.

Adam Fityan (af999@doctors.org.uk), specialist registrar in dermatology,
Birgit Pees, consultant dermatologist, Royal South Hants Hospital, Southampton SO14 0YG, UK
Patient consent obtained.

Cite this as: *BMJ* 2013;346:f202

P=0.007), yet no significant differences were observed in length of stay, admissions to the critical care unit, readmission, or mortality. The number needed to treat was five.

Are people with panic disorder more likely to develop atrial fibrillation (AF) in later life? A large Taiwanese cohort study reports that although incidence of AF was small, it was significantly higher in the panic disorder cohort than in the control cohort without panic. Age, male sex, hypertension, ischaemic heart disease, heart failure, and valvular heart disease were also independently associated with an increased incidence of future AF (*Psychosomatic Medicine* 2013;75:30-5, doi:10.1097/PSY.0b013e318273393a)

Wikipedia is becoming one of the most popular websites in the world for health content, and is

moving closer to a formal publication model. The health content of Wikipedia is curated by volunteer editors, but is open to be edited and corrected by anyone who wishes to do so, as long as appropriate references are included. A semiformal, peer review process by volunteers is helping to improve quality, and is followed by translation into as many other languages as possible via collaboration with Translators Without Borders (*Bulletin of the World Health Organization* 2013;91:8-9, doi:10.2471/BLT.13.030113).

Analysis of 2000 year old tablets, found on a shipwreck called *Relitto del Pozzino* dating from the 2nd century BC, showed a composition largely of hydrozincite and smithsonite, alongside starch, animal and plant lipids, and pine resin. From the tablets’ shape and composition, scientists believe that they were used as an eye wash, and that the vegetable fibres may have been added to prevent breakage or crumbling of the tablets (*Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 2013, doi:10.1073/pnas.1216776110).

Complaints of a sexual nature against health professionals are increasing in South Africa, where there are no guidelines about the use of chaperones. A survey of gynaecologists and medical practitioners reports that of 218 (43%) questionnaires completed, 72% were in favour of using chaperones, yet only 27% always do so. Most respondents felt that consensual sexual relationships with patients were unacceptable, but 83% would like official ethical guidance on the issue (*South African Medical Journal* 2013;103:25-7, doi:10.7196/SAMJ.6224).

Babies of low birth weight are prone to both iron deficiency in infancy and behavioural problems later on. A study of early iron supplementation given to babies born under 2.5 kg found no effect on later cognitive function at 3.5 years of age, but there was a significant reduction in the prevalence of behavioural problems at this age. The researchers suggest a causal association between infant iron deficiency and behavioural problems (*Pediatrics* 2013;131:47-55, doi:10.1542/peds.2012-0989)

Cite this as: *BMJ* 2013;346:f203