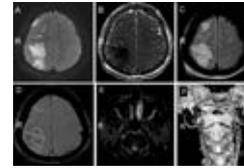


MINERVA

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Focal neurological deficits after trauma
Try the picture quiz in *ENDGAMES*, p 34

Coping with complex chronic illness is hard work. Current ideas about self care, self empowerment, and self actualisation can increase the work expected from sick people, especially when combined with new technologies and treatment modalities for use at home. The burden of treatment theory conceptualises the effect of such demands on patients and their support networks. Everyone who looks after chronically ill people should read an excellent account of it in *BMC Health Services Research* (2014;14:281, doi:10.1186/1472-6963-14-281), which has Carl May and Victor Montori among the authors.

Women who are being treated for high blood pressure are at higher risk of developing psoriasis, according to an analysis of 77 728 US women from the Nurses' Health Study, who provided biennially updated data on hypertension and antihypertensive drugs (*JAMA Dermatology* 2014, doi:10.1001/jamadermatol.2013.9957). People with psoriasis have long been known to be at higher risk of developing hypertension, but this is the first study to show that the association works both ways. The only antihypertensives that seem to carry a higher overall risk are the β adrenergic blockers.

Perhaps the strongest reason why the complete databases of all clinical trials should be available for reanalysis is the very poor and inconsistent reporting of adverse effects in the literature. A new study in *BMJ Open* (2014;4:e005535, doi:10.1136/bmjopen-2014-005535) looked at serious adverse effect data in journal articles and in *ClinicalStudyResults.org*, which is sponsored by Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America and *clinicaltrials.gov*, and administered by the US National Institutes of Health. It found astonishing levels of discrepancy and under-reporting in and between these standard sources of drug trial information.

Now that statins have been recommended for much wider use in primary prevention, what groups of people are least likely to keep taking them? If the people of Finland are typical, those least likely to remain adherent are people who drink heavily and those with three to four lifestyle risks, such as smoking, low activity, and obesity (*CMAJ* 2014, doi:10.1503/cmaj.131807). The non-adherence rate in people without cardiovascular disease was 41%, whereas in those with established disease it was 49%,



A 73 year old man presented with a three month history of right fifth toe ulceration that had been treated unsuccessfully for a presumptive fungal infection. He had lost 7 kg in a month and had a diffusely enlarged, erythematous, non-tender mass on the tip of the right fifth toe. Amputation was performed and histological examination identified pleomorphic rhabdomyosarcoma. Thoracic computed tomography showed lung metastasis. He received systemic chemotherapy but died six months later from progressive disease. Rhabdomyosarcoma accounts for less than 0.03% of all adult cancers; the extremities and trunk are the most common primary sites.

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Patient consent obtained.

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showing that those at greatest risk are often the least likely to take their statins.

An observational study of lithium use in Denmark (*British Journal of Psychiatry* 2014, doi:10.1192/bjp.bp.113.142802) shows that if you are confident that a patient has a manic or bipolar disorder at first contact, the response will probably be better if you prescribe the drug right away. However, nobody has yet done a prospective randomised trial of early versus delayed lithium treatment.

Compared with their mothers, the young women of Queensland are drinking more alcohol, according to a long term follow-up study of 1053 women recruited when pregnant between 1981

and 1983 (*JAMA Psychiatry* 2014, doi:10.1001/jamapsychiatry.2014.513). The daughters' alcohol intake was assessed when they reached the same age (18-25 years) that their mothers had been when they were enrolled. The number of young women who consume more than 30 units of alcohol a month has risen dramatically, which causes the authors concern.

Bone cement implantation syndrome (BCIS) is a dangerous phenomenon, as shown in a case series described by Swedish anaesthetists (*British Journal of Anaesthesia* 2014, doi:10.1093/bja/aeu226). They looked specifically at patients undergoing cemented hemiarthroplasty for femoral neck fracture and found that the degree of hypotension, arterial desaturation, or loss of consciousness around cementation was strongly associated with mortality. The syndrome is most common in patients with impaired cardiac and pulmonary function, and severe BCIS was associated with a 16-fold increase in mortality.

This football World Cup year, television viewers risked switching their sets on to find the programme they were hoping to view replaced by a discussion of hamstring injuries. "They'll be doing a scan on his leg tomorrow and then we might know whether he'll be fit for that vital match next week." Oh no we won't: a study in the *British Journal of Sports Medicine* (2014, doi:10.1136/bjsports-2014-093737) shows that magnetic resonance imaging of hamstring injuries has little predictive value for recurrence compared with clinical examination after return to play.

Go walking, eat a Mediterranean diet, and enrich your mind continually. If you live like Plato, Marcus Aurelius, or Dante, you will probably avoid Alzheimer's disease. The effect of lifetime intellectual enrichment on the risk of Alzheimer's disease was studied in the propitious location of Olmsted County, Minnesota (*JAMA Neurology* 2014, doi:10.1001/jamaneurol.2014.963). The investigators found that the longer you spent cramming your mind, the later you tended to get dementia. "Lifetime intellectual enrichment might delay the onset of cognitive impairment and be used as a successful preventive intervention to reduce the impending dementia epidemic." Minerva is not quite sure what they have in mind, but reading this column must be part of it.

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