

# MINERVA

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The non-publication of clinical trials is unethical—it breaches the trust of those who consented to take part in the experiment because it would produce useful knowledge. But just under a third of trials remain unpublished four years after completion, according to the latest study based on a survey of 400 trials registered with ClinicalTrials.gov (*PLoS One* 2014, doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0101826). This is only a modest improvement on the results of Joe Ross and colleagues' landmark study of 2009 (*PLoS Medicine* 2009, doi:10.1371/journal.pmed.1000144). Trial participants and all who use knowledge deserve better.

Minerva was surprised to read in a recent Cochrane review of thiazide diuretics for hypertension (*Cochrane Database Systematic Reviews* 2014;5:CD003824, doi:10.1002/14651858.CD003824.pub2) that these drugs may not cause diabetes. "Chlortalidone increased serum glucose but the evidence was unclear for other thiazides." Chlortalidone is, in fact, not a true thiazide, unlike hydrochlorothiazide, indapamide, and trichlormethiazide, which were the agents used in the Japanese DIME trial (*BMJ Open* 2014;4:e004576 doi:10.1136/bmjopen-2013-004576). This was designed to settle the question of whether this class of diuretics causes an increase in new diabetes in patients, and the data show that these thiazides, in low doses and in a Japanese population, are entirely innocent of inducing type 2 diabetes compared with other agents.

Castleman's disease is the sort of condition that gives doctors a guilty start, caught between pretending to know what it is and having to ask. Minerva will remind you. It is a rare lymphoproliferative disorder driven by dysregulated production of interleukin 6. And now Janssen has made an antibody to interleukin 6 and called it siltuximab. A trial funded by the company (*Lancet Oncology* 2014;15:966-74, doi:10.1016/S1470-2045(14)70319-5) shows that it reduces symptoms and tumour size in about a third of patients.

Falstaff refers to a "whoreson tingling" as one of the symptoms suffered by the ailing King Henry IV (see Shakespeare, *Henry IV* pt 2), and peripheral neuropathy must have been quite widespread in vitamin deprived Plantagenet times. Today even humble generalists often track down and treat its causes successfully, using cheap



This picture shows the displaced threads of an intrauterine system, which have perforated the cervix and appear in the 2 o'clock position instead of the cervical os. This was discovered during a routine smear test—the patient had not reported a problem. The correct intrauterine placement of the device was confirmed by ultrasound and hysteroscopy, but the threads had perforated the endocervical canal. An incorrect attempt at pulling on the threads to remove the coil would have caused cervical trauma. The device was removed by grasping the threads from the endocervical canal during hysteroscopy. The patient had no anatomical defects in her uterus or cervix.

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blood tests for diabetes, thyroid dysfunction, and vitamin B<sub>12</sub> deficiency. By contrast, a new study (*JAMA Neurology* 2014, doi:10.1001/jamaneurol.2014.1279) of the role of neurologists and diagnostic tests in the management of distal symmetric polyneuropathy finds that expensive electrodiagnostic tests and magnetic resonance imaging rarely change patient care.

Minerva recently told you that more febrile young children than ever are being admitted to hospital, while ever fewer turn out to have serious sepsis. In the first three months of life many have blood cultures taken and stay in hospital until these come back clear. A new study (*JAMA Pediatrics* 2014, doi:10.1001/jamapediatrics.2014.895) from 17 hospital systems across the US looked at 392 pathogenic blood samples from infants in



## More than just a simple fracture

Try the picture quiz in *ENDGAMES*, p 36

the first 90 days of life and found that by 24 hours, 91% had shown positive. "These data suggest that inpatient observation of febrile infants for more than 24 hours may be unnecessary in most infants," the study concludes.

The reputation of surgery for intractable psychiatric problems has declined since the heady days of "icepick lobotomies" carried out by the thousand in the office of Walter Freeman in the late 1940s. The so called gamma knife sounds much more precise, although it is just a beam of ionising radiation. In a Brazilian sham controlled trial conducted in patients with intractable obsessive-compulsive disorder (*JAMA Psychiatry* 2014, doi:10.1001/jamapsychiatry.2014.1193), two distinct isocentres on each side were gamma irradiated at the ventral border of the anterior limb of the internal capsule. Three of eight patients randomised to active treatment responded at 12 months, whereas none of the eight patients given the sham treatment responded.

An "eatwell plate" is the Department of Health's standard measure of healthy eating. Using dietary data from 30 000 participants in the UK Women's Cohort Study, researchers found seven dietary patterns, judged them by the eatwell plate, and priced them (*Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health* 2014, doi:10.1136/jech-2014-204039). The healthiest dietary pattern was double the price of the least healthy—£6.63/day versus £3.29/day.

"If a man is suffering from facial paralysis and half of his body is paralysed it is Šipir mišitti [stroke]." A 1000 years before the Greeks and Romans, the Mesopotamians were great observers of neurological and neuropsychiatric conditions. An article in *Brain* (2014, doi:10.1093/brain/awu192) contains clear descriptions of epilepsy, automatism, and obsessive-compulsive disorder, all from clay tablets in the British Museum.

Sabrina Waheed, the paediatric society president at St George's Hospital Medical School, has a lovely plan. She and others will go to the paediatric wards within the hospital and play with the children. "We will also carry out various exciting activities to distract them from the dull evening hospital environment. You can help us by donating toys or money towards toys. Please do contact us at [m1100992@sgul.ac.uk](mailto:m1100992@sgul.ac.uk)."

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