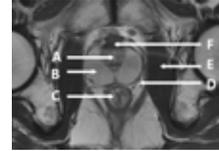


# MINERVA

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## Axial T2 weighted magnetic resonance imaging of the male pelvis

Try the anatomy quiz in ENDGAMES, p 36

When extracts of *Artemisia annua* were first found to cure malaria, rejoicing was tempered with anxiety that the wily old parasites might quickly develop resistance. But although the suboptimal use of artemisinin drugs in Cambodia has led to the emergence of partially resistant strains of *Plasmodium falciparum*, they can still be killed by adequate regimens containing artesunate. And so far these strains do not seem to be spreading widely, according to a study in the *Journal of Infectious Diseases* (2014, doi:10.1093/infdis/jiu491). The main determinant of resistance, a mutation in a kelch protein encoded on chromosome 13, has not yet been seen in malaria parasites in Myanmar (Burma), which neighbours the endemic area.

After a first episode of unprovoked venous thromboembolism (VTE), most patients take anticoagulants for a few months and then stop. In the WARFASA and ASPIRE trials, the annual rate of recurrent VTE thereafter was 7.5%. Looking at the trials separately, 100 mg of aspirin daily failed to have a significant protective effect, but pooled data from the trials showed a reduction of the annual VTE rate to 5.1%, with a low risk of bleeding (*Circulation* 2014, doi:10.1161/CIRCULATIONAHA.114.008828). Another triumph for aspirin and for individual patient data meta-analysis.

Among preparations for the 2012 London Olympics was a contingency plan for the surge in sexually transmitted infections that would inevitably accompany such a mass gathering. But a study in the *Journal of Public Health* (2014, doi:10.1093/pubmed/fdu064) finds no evidence that such a surge occurred. Sexual health services reported business as usual, confirming Minerva's suspicion that watching people jump around from a great distance does not increase libido.

Predicting which patients with Parkinson's disease are most likely to develop dementia may, hopefully, be the first step towards trials of preventive therapy. So Minerva was interested to read a Canadian study (*Neurology* 2014, doi:10.1212/WNL.0000000000000842) that followed up 80 patients with Parkinson's disease for a mean 4.4 years. The 27 patients who developed dementia were much more likely to have baseline cognitive impairment, orthostatic hypotension, rapid eye movement sleep behaviour disorder, colour discrimination distortion, and gait dysfunction.



A 56 year old male, non-diabetic, former smoker presented with painful penile and scrotal ulcers, sacral ulceration, and bilateral critical limb ischaemia. No micro-organisms were found in wound swabs or a midstream urine specimen. Magnetic resonance angiography showed distal aortic and bilateral common iliac occlusions, which usually present clinically as Leriche syndrome: a triad of impotence, buttock or thigh claudication, and reduced femoral pulse. An aortobi-iliac bypass graft restored bilateral internal iliac inflow and resulted in ulcer healing and resolution of critical limb ischaemia.

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A study of airline pilots suggests that they have double the population incidence of melanoma (*JAMA Dermatol*, doi:10.1001/jamadermatol.2014.1077). The investigators speculate on the role of cosmic rays (high energy protons and atomic nuclei from deep space). But Minerva wonders if the high incidence is because airline pilots undergo more medical checks than the ordinary population, as this is the biggest determinant for a diagnosis of melanoma, as described by Welsh, Schwartz, and Woloshin in *Overdiagnosed* (Beacon Press, 2011).

Stiff-man syndrome, as it used to be known, is a one in a million neurological disorder that is usually accompanied by high levels of anti-glutamic acid decarboxylase antibodies. It became politically incorrect in 1991 and is now known as stiff-

person syndrome. The latest immune modulating treatment to be tried for it is autologous stem cell transplantation (*JAMA Neurol* 2014, doi:10.1001/jamaneurol.2014.1297). Two Canadian patients have experienced a marked remission of symptoms, which has lasted 2.5 and 4.5 years after the procedure.

In May 2013, an outbreak of symptomatic hepatitis A virus infections occurred in the United States. Two people developed fulminant hepatitis, and one needed a liver transplant. An amazing detective exercise ensued, from which it was discovered that the source came from Turkey (*Lancet Infectious Dis* 2014;14:976-81, doi:10.1016/S1473-3099(14)70883-7). Looking on the web, Minerva finds that US citizens have a seemingly insatiable appetite for pomegranates and their arils. Aril refers to the fleshy covering of pomegranate seeds, which unfortunately cannot be enjoyed without eating the seeds themselves. The epidemic, which covered 10 states, was caused by a contaminated batch of frozen Turkish pomegranate arils.

Cannabinoid hyperemesis syndrome is characterised by intractable nausea and vomiting in people who have been heavy users of cannabis for years. Victims often seek relief in the bath, and compulsive bathing is a pathognomonic symptom, according to a short account in the *Canadian Medical Association Journal* (2014, doi:10.1503/cmaj.140154). So if you ever come across Vomiting Larry, an unusually well bathed old hippie who regularly attends the emergency department, remember that first line antiemetics won't work for him but haloperidol or lorazepam might do, and abstinence is the only cure.

Actually, Vomiting Larry is the name of a new projectile vomiting simulator. It has been constructed in what used to be a rocket research facility on Harpur Hill, Buxton, Derbyshire to mimic the worst case scenario of vomiting caused by norovirus infection (*J Inf Prev* 2014, doi:10.1177/1757177414545390). "Projectile vomiting can occur without warning, and thus the simulated vomiting system was designed to represent a person projectile vomiting while in a standing position." Using fluorescent artificial vomitus, the study suggests that areas of at least 7.8 m<sup>2</sup> should be decontaminated after an episode of projectile vomiting. Bring your biggest mop and bucket.

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