

## Sagittal T2 weighted magnetic resonance image of the female pelvis

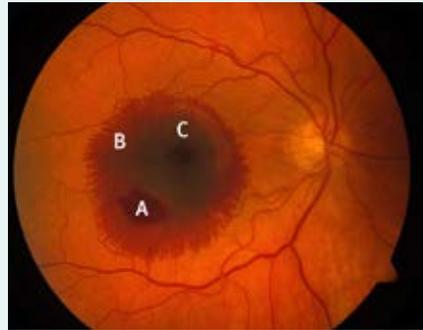
Try the anatomy quiz in ENDGAMES, p 35

Sisyphus, King of Corinth, was known to the Greeks as the craftiest of men. After he died, he played a trick on Thanatos (Death), chaining him up so that nobody could die. But as everyone knows, he didn't get away with it, and was thereafter condemned to rolling a huge boulder uphill and watch it roll back down, pushing it back endlessly through eternity. Researchers should heed the fate of Sisyphus. His name is invoked in the title of an editorial (*Clinical Infectious Diseases* 2015, doi:10.1093/cid/civ371) that comments on our attempts to outwit that old friend of Death, *Streptococcus pneumoniae*. The trouble with current 13 valent vaccines is that their early success shows signs of waning as other pathogenic strains take over. This is illustrated in a study of pneumococcal meningitis in American children (*Clinical Infectious Diseases* 2015, doi:10.1093/cid/civ368). We need a universal pneumococcal vaccine.

As patients near the expected end of life, attempts are often made to rationalise their drug regimens. At the same time new drugs are often introduced in the hope of relieving symptoms. A study from Australia reviewed 166 patients' drug regimens in the last two weeks of life and screened them for potential interactions using the Stockley's drug interactions software (*BMJ Supportive and Palliative Care* 2015, doi:10.1136/bmjspcare-2014-000767). The study found that 72% of patients were at risk of one or more potential drug-drug interactions. The mean number of potential interactions was 4.4 per patient.

External cephalic version is still widely used in an attempt to correct breech presentation in the third trimester. In modern practice it is often carried out under spinal anaesthesia or intravenous analgesia using remifentanyl. A randomised trial from Hong Kong compared these techniques and found a better success rate for version using spinal anaesthesia (*British Journal of Anaesthesia* 2015, doi:10.1093/bja/aev107\0).

Visual acuity is the obvious outcome measure in trials of interventions for age related macular degeneration (AMD). But many more outcomes are important to patients with AMD and they have been gathered together in patient reported outcome measures (PROMs), such as the National Eye Institute Visual Function Questionnaire-25. A survey of 177 randomised trials in AMD finds that



A 67 year old woman presented with sudden onset painless loss of central vision in the right eye. Fundus examination showed a macular haemorrhage involving three tissue layers (trilaminar), characteristic of a ruptured retinal artery macroaneurysm: preretinal (obscuring the ruptured macroaneurysm—A); intraretinal (feathery border appearance—B); and subretinal (beneath the fovea, with retinal vessels coursing over—C). Because she presented promptly, the haemorrhage was successfully displaced after intravitreal injection of tissue plasminogen activator and sulphur hexafluoride gas, plus a short postoperative period of face down head posturing. Retinal artery macroaneurysms classically occur in elderly women and are strongly associated with hypertension.

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Patient consent obtained.

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only 25 of them use PROMs of any kind (*British Journal of Ophthalmology* 2015, doi:10.1136/bjophthalmol-2014-306544). Is this ethically acceptable?

Migraine auras are a plaything for fanciful historians who have suggested that they might explain such things as the visions of Hildegard of Bingen or the patterns of Islamic decorative art. A survey of 267 migraineurs from Denmark (*Cephalgia* 2015, doi:10.1177/0333102415584601) describes how auras can take an almost endless variety of forms because they can involve many different parts of the brain, separately or concurrently. Non-visual auras are common and can include all the senses, including smell.

Neurocognitive dysfunction caused by reduced brain perfusion affects 25-50% of patients with advanced heart failure. Left ventricular assist devices (LVADs) can dramatically improve perfusion, but unfortunately they carry their own hazard of cognitive impairment, according to a study of 1173 American LVAD recipients (*Circulation Cardiovascular Quality and Outcomes* 2015, doi:10.1161/CIRCOUTCOMES.115.001856). Cognitive testing at three, six, and 12 months showed that nearly 30% of patients experienced a decline in the year after LVAD implantation.

Bariatric surgery is a potential cure for type 2 diabetes, and Roux-en-Y gastric bypass is particularly effective. But a randomised trial of this operation compared with lifestyle and medical management shows that the price can be high in terms of various nutritional deficiencies, despite attempts to forestall these by supplementation (*Lancet Infectious Diseases* 2015, doi:10.1016/S2213-8587(15)00089-3). Although the trial ran for three years and recruited 120 participants, the investigators conclude that larger and longer studies are needed to investigate whether the benefits and risk of gastric bypass for type 2 diabetes can be balanced.

Judging the effect of drugs in children compared with adults is difficult enough, but it can be more difficult than ever now that many children are obese. A review of the literature on pharmacokinetics in obese children (*JAMA Pediatrics* 2015, doi:10.1001/jamapediatrics.2015.132) discovers large gaps in our knowledge of weight based dosing. The authors suggest that prospective pharmacokinetic trials in obese children are needed to ensure therapeutic efficacy and enhance drug safety.

Good news for patients with heart failure. An agent has been discovered that is associated with a better perceived and objective health status, lower prevalence of depression, and less vascular inflammation. Although it does not reduce mortality or hospital admission, it makes people with this distressing syndrome feel better (*Circulation Heart Failure* 2015, doi:10.1161/CIRCHEARTFAILURE.114.002091). Minerva thinks that it should be offered to them whenever possible. It's called wine.

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