



An occult cause of dyspnoea

Try the spot diagnosis in ENDGAMES, p 35

Most clinical research fails to deal with important clinical questions. The James Lind Alliance (JLA) was set up by Iain Chalmers and others more than 10 years ago to help rectify this by bringing patients and working clinicians into dialogue about research priorities. It has worked wonderfully well and is a model for the world. But an analysis of its inputs shows that although JLA priority setting partnerships mentioned drugs in only 18% of prioritised proposals, in registered non-commercial trials drugs accounted for 37% of the treatments mentioned; and in registered commercial trials drugs accounted for 86% (*Research Involvement and Engagement* 2015, doi:10.1186/s40900-015-0003-x).

It's 100 years since Ernest Codman proposed that surgeons should subject their results to detailed and honest appraisal, much to the alarm of his Boston colleagues. He would have been enthusiastic about laparoscopic video recording, which showed error events in two thirds of 54 unedited recordings of bariatric laparoscopic procedures analysed in a Canadian study (*BMJ Quality and Safety* 2015, doi:10.1136/bmjqs-2014-003816). If tennis stars have to watch replays with their coaches, why not surgeons?

Intensive care units are places where antibiotics have to be used quickly and appropriately. But a study of decisions in a Brazilian intensive care unit (*BMC Infectious Diseases* 2015, doi:10.1186/s12879-015-0992-y) shows a certain lack of agreement. Of the antimicrobial regimens prescribed to the 177 patients, 36% were considered inappropriate by infectious disease specialist 1 and 38% were considered inappropriate by specialist 2. The study found 78% agreement by at least one of the specialists with the prescribed antimicrobial regimen, and in 49% of cases both specialists agreed. Both disagreed with the prescribed regimen in 22% of cases and they disagreed between themselves in 29% of cases.

Blame the telly. A study of BMI-defined obesity among children and adolescents in the general English population did its best to measure activity levels by questionnaire and, where it could, by accelerometry (*BMJ Open* 2015, doi:10.1136/bmjopen-2014-007172).



A young woman presented with painful gums and lethargy. C reactive protein (CRP) and proteinase-3 anti-neutrophil cytoplasmic antibodies were raised (60 IU/mL; reference range 0-5). She was diagnosed as having strawberry gums, pathognomonic of granulomatosis with polyangiitis (GPA), and started on immunosuppression. All her symptoms gradually resolved and her CRP normalised. GPA is a rare small vessel vasculitis that usually affects the kidneys, upper airways, and lungs. Strawberry gums—hyperplastic gingivitis—are an uncommon but classic feature. Early recognition of this clinical presentation may aid early diagnosis of GPA, allowing appropriate management and improving prognosis.

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It found that television viewing, and not other forms of objectively measured or questionnaire based sedentary time, was associated with obesity in children and adolescents.

The first successful drug eluting coronary stent was licensed in 2002 and contained sirolimus, an inhibitor of the mammalian target-of-rapamycin pathway. Since then the stent market has been intensely competitive, although no clear winner seems to have emerged. The latest head on trial to be reported (*Circulation Cardiovascular Interventions* 2015, doi:10.1161/CIRCINTERVENTIONS.114.002230) ended in a draw between zotarolimus and everolimus eluting stents at five years. This could go on for ever and everolimus. Amen.

Think infective gangrene, think clostridium. Necrotising enterocolitis is the much feared scourge of premature baby units, and a clostridium may be at work here too, according to a study that used rRNA pyrosequencing and culture based methods to compare the microbiota of stool samples from preterm neonates with necrotising enterocolitis (n=15) and controls (n=15) (*Clinical Infectious Diseases* 2015, doi:10.1093/cid/civ468). Necrotising enterocolitis was associated with *Clostridium butyricum* strains and an oxidised, acidic, and poorly diversified gut microbiota.

Polio should have been eliminated by now. But one of the most unconscionable brutalities of Islamist extremism is the murder of vaccinators who want to spare children avoidable paralysis and death. Now two studies—from Pakistan (*Lancet Infectious Diseases* 2015, doi:10.1016/S1473-3099(15)00093-6) and Bangladesh (*Lancet Infectious Diseases* 2015, doi:10.1016/S1473-3099(15)00094-8)—show that accelerated polio vaccine schedules can work as well as conventional schedules, so there may be time to protect children during brief windows of opportunity.

Among the various woes that fat Britons are warned about by the chief medical officer is hypertension. But although the 1946 and 1958 British birth cohorts show an increase in obesity, they show an overall drop in diastolic blood pressure (*International Journal of Epidemiology* 2015, doi:10.1093/ije/dyv106). British health professionals do, however, need to ensure that they have an adequate stock of large adult sphygmomanometer cuffs.

The *New England Journal of Medicine* recently ran several articles questioning whether financial links with industry really create bias in medicine. If they don't, what is it that companies are hoping to achieve with the money they pay to doctors? In 2011, 432 biomedical companies handed out more than \$17 991 000 (£11 529 110; €16 240 810) in direct payments to 220 908 doctors (*PLOS One* 2015, doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0129197). Minerva is troubled to find that of these doctors, 75.1% were male. Moreover, female doctors received \$3598.63 less on average per person than men.

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