



## Sudden onset diffuse erythema and oedema of the breast

Try the case review in *ENDGAMES*, p 35

Multiple sclerosis and vitamin D deficiency have often been linked. This association has been confirmed by a mendelian randomisation study in *PLoS Medicine* (2015, doi:10.1371/journal.pmed.1001866), which showed that people with genetically determined reduced levels of 25-hydroxyvitamin D are at increased risk of multiple sclerosis (MS). Meanwhile, a study of 2301 people with established MS suggests that sunlight and vitamin D supplementation may also affect symptom severity (*BMC Neurology* 2015;15:132, doi:10.1186/s12883-015-0394-1). After adjusting for confounders, the likelihood of disability increased the further that patients were from the equator.

Ireland is far from the equator and is prey to Atlantic weather systems that blot out the sun. A study of three Irish cohorts of mean age 70-80 years found that most had vitamin D deficiency or insufficiency (*Age and Ageing* 2015;44:847-53, doi:10.1093/ageing/afv090). Taking vitamin D supplements and seeking the sun—in Ireland or abroad—were the strongest determinants of 25-hydroxyvitamin D levels. But unfortunately no one has established the optimal level of vitamin D supplementation or the best holiday destination.

Last July, BBC Radio 4 broadcast an interview about patients recording medical consultations and advertised a survey on the topic. There were 168 responses, and an article in *BMJ Open* (2015;5:e008566, doi:10.1136/bmjopen-2015-008566) describes interviews with 17 of the respondents. About a third of people said that they would consider covertly recording a consultation, and there was a general wish that recording could be facilitated. The prime motive for recording was to enhance the experience of care.

Health technology assessment (HTA) is the appraisal of new clinical interventions. It's often a one-off process that depends on limited trial data. Most trials of elective endovascular repair of abdominal aortic aneurysms (EVAR) have shown similar costs and long term outcomes to open repair. But a new US study finds that between 2000 and 2011 the perioperative outcomes of EVAR improved significantly, despite a higher prevalence of comorbidities in patients undergoing repair (*Journal of Vascular Surgery* 2015, doi:10.1016/j.jvs.2015.06.138). Concurrently, procedure associated costs declined. HTA needs to be a dynamic process using timely outcomes data.



A 64 year old man with diabetes and metastatic prostate cancer presented with a four month history of a slowly progressive, hard, indurated mass on his right cheek and perimandibular area. This evolved into multiple abscesses and draining sinus tracts with reddish appearance and thick yellow exudates. *Actinomyces meyeri* was confirmed by culture. Cervicofacial actinomycosis is a subacute-chronic suppurative granulomatous infection caused by actinomyces in the oral cavity. It is the most common form of actinomycosis (50-70%), affecting patients with poor oral hygiene or dental-periodontal disease and debilitating conditions (diabetes, immunosuppression, or malnutrition). High dose, long term treatment with intravenous penicillin G, followed by oral penicillin V or amoxicillin, is recommended according to severity. For penicillin allergic patients, tetracyclines are the best alternative.

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Patient consent obtained.

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Gonorrhoea is often cited as a warning by those predicting an age of universal antibiotic resistance. But its unique ecology and mode of spread mean it isn't a good example. And a recent survey (carrying the splendid acronym Euro-GASP) shows that extended

cephalosporin resistance among isolates of *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* in Europe hardly changed between 2012 and 2013, at around 4% (*BMC Infectious Diseases* 2015;15:321, doi:10.1186/s12879-015-1013-x). Elsewhere in the world cephalosporin resistance is declining.

Pembrolizumab is a therapeutic antibody that blocks the inhibitory ligand of programmed cell death 1 receptor. This releases the immune system to attack melanoma cells in disseminated malignant melanoma, but it also produces a more generalised autoimmune response in many patients, causing widespread rashes and loss of skin pigment. A study of patients treated with pembrolizumab (*JAMA Dermatology* 2015, doi:10.1001/jamadermatol.2015.1) shows that such generalised reactions are associated with better clearance of melanoma metastases.

Have you ever wondered what it is like to cope with psychosis every day? You can find out easily by listening to people who do it (<http://bit.ly/1AzMVOK>). It's one more illustration of the immense value of the [healthtalk.org](http://healthtalk.org) website set up 15 years ago and still growing as an amazingly rich and underused resource for patients and health professionals. Why is there so little research on coping patterns? Here is a gold mine that anyone can take a pick at.

How can it be ethical to do research on humans and not publish the results? An audit of studies submitting an end of study declaration to the Hampshire A research ethics committee (formerly Southampton A) between 1 January 2010 and 31 December 2011 found a publication rate of only 32% (*BMC Medical Ethics* 2015;16:51, doi:10.1186/s12910-015-0042-8).

Minerva is the goddess of wisdom and healing and regards sport as an unwise activity that often results in injury. She finds that people with sports injuries often demand immediate investigation and treatment, instead of welcoming the break as a valuable opportunity to read. A recent prospective study of the utility of magnetic resonance imaging within five days of hamstring injuries in a cohort of 180 male athletes found that it made no difference to recovery time (*British Journal of Sports Medicine* 2015, doi:10.1136/bjsports-2015-094892). Let them read Proust.

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