



A darkly pigmented lesion with recent changes
Try the picture quiz in
ENDGAMES, p 701

Sensory disturbance—measured electrophysiologically or subjectively—does not provide a good yardstick by which to assess potential carpal tunnel syndrome. A study of 64 patients showed that objective testing (using pressure aesthesiometry) did not correlate well with the results of nerve conduction studies or subjective testing (producing a hand symptom diagram), and the results do not support the use of objective sensory assessment for the initial diagnosis of carpal tunnel syndrome. The authors say that the patient's description of symptoms remains the most useful diagnostic tool (*Annals of the Royal College of Surgeons of England* 2011;93:470-3, doi:10.1308/003588411X586191).

People who ruminate when stressed should exercise. A study in *Psychosomatic Medicine* found that people who maintain a physically active lifestyle may be protected against the effects of rumination on hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis reactivity, while also helping them recover from acute stress (2011;73:604-11, doi:10.1097/PSY.0b013e318229e1e0). The more sedentary participants of the trial who responded to stress with higher levels of rumination had a significantly more rapid initial increase in cortisol level, a later peak in cortisol reactivity, and delayed recovery from stress compared with those who ruminated less.

Is diabetes a cause or a consequence of pancreatic cancer? A meta-analysis including 35 cohort studies found that diabetes was associated with an increased risk of pancreatic cancer—with subgroup analyses indicating that the risk is independent of alcohol intake, geographical location, age, sex, study design, smoking, or body mass index. The highest risk of pancreatic cancer was found among patients diagnosed with diabetes within less than one year (*European Journal of Cancer* 2011;47:1928-37, doi:10.1016/j.ejca.2011.03.003).

The poorest neighbourhoods in Boston are exposed to the greatest number of adverts for alcohol (*American Journal of Public Health* 2011;101:1936-41, doi:10.2105/AJPH.2011.300159). Alcohol advertising at subway stations reached the equivalent of every adult in the Greater Boston region and the equivalent of every 5th to 12th grade public school student (ages 10-18) each day. Targeting alcohol



A 70 year old man with peripheral neuropathy presented with acutely swollen painful fingers shortly after a lengthy period of clearing snow in subzero temperatures without wearing gloves. Peripheral pulses and Doppler measurements were normal. He was treated conservatively with sterile dressings, elevation, and anti-inflammatory drugs. We aspirated his blisters to reduce the potential for dermal ischaemia caused by accumulation of pro-inflammatory prostaglandins and thromboxanes. There was no permanent skin damage, indicating that he had suffered frostnip, not frostbite. We suggest that all patients with known peripheral neuropathy be advised on the importance of reducing exposure times and wearing appropriate hand and foot protection in extreme cold.

Claire Reichl (creichl@doctors.org.uk), specialist registrar, James Bristol, consultant, Department of Surgery, Cheltenham General Hospital, Cheltenham GL53 7AN Patient consent obtained.
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advertising at populations already at increased risk for poorer health will do little to improve health for vulnerable people, say the researchers.

Minerva naively thought the positive effect of marriage on men's health was related to them being happy. Now she reads that it's not so much about their emotional state but about the health seeking behaviour of married men. Among men experiencing chest pain caused by myocardial infarction, being married was associated with significantly earlier presentation for care than in those who were unmarried. Married women did not enjoy the same benefit (*Canadian Medical Association Journal* 2011;183:1482-91, doi:10.1503/cmaj.110170).

Toddlers who drink milk fortified with vitamin D achieve target concentrations of 25-hydroxyvitamin D in their serum without adversely affecting parathyroid hormone levels.

A New Zealand study investigated the effect of providing red meat or fortified milk on toddlers' iron, zinc, iodine, and vitamin D statuses. The prevalence of low vitamin D levels remained unchanged at 43% in the group eating meat, but decreased significantly to 11-15% in those drinking fortified milk (*Journal of Nutrition* 2011;141:1840-6, doi:10.3945/jn.111.145052).

First pregnancies that end in stillbirth presage further stillbirths (*BJOG* 2011, doi:10.1111/j.1471-0528.2011.03137.x). Data from an American study involving over 320 000 women who had two singleton pregnancies estimated a stillbirth rate of 4.2 per 1000. Women with a previous infant death were three times as likely to experience stillbirth in their subsequent pregnancy. Black women who had experienced previous infant death were more than four times as likely to experience subsequent stillbirth, compared with black women whose previous infants survived, and were more than nine times as likely to experience stillbirth as white women.

Thrombophilia is linked to complications in pregnancy and recurrent miscarriage, and some think it contributes to failures of assisted reproduction technology. A systematic review of thrombophilia in women undergoing assisted reproduction yielded 33 studies involving over 6000 patients. The combined results from case-control studies showed that factor V Leiden was significantly more prevalent among those whose assisted pregnancies failed compared with fertile women or those achieving pregnancy after assisted reproduction procedures, and women for whom the procedures failed tested positive for antiphospholipid antibodies more frequently. Prospective studies, however, did not generally support these observations (*Blood* 2011;118:2670-8, doi:10.1182/blood-2011-03-340216).

Colonoscopy screening intervals should vary depending on the number of first degree relatives who have colorectal cancer, according to *Cancer* (2011;117:166-74, doi:10.1002/cncr.26009). Strictly speaking, the maths show that the best screening strategy for individuals with one first degree relative diagnosed after age 50 is six colonoscopies every five years starting at age 50, and 10 colonoscopies every four years for individuals with one first degree relative diagnosed before age 50.

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