



Coronal section of brain

Try the anatomy quiz in
ENDGAMES, p 46

Smoking cannabis is better than placebo at reducing spasticity in patients with multiple sclerosis with treatment resistant spasticity. In a study of 30 patients, daily assessments were made before and after treatment, with a washout interval of 11 days before patients crossed over to the other group. Spasticity improved significantly, but scores for “timed walks” did not (*CMAJ* 2012;184:1143-50, doi:10.1503/cmaj.110837). Although well tolerated, smoking cannabis caused acute cognitive effects, and the team plans to test whether lower doses will have similar benefits but with a reduced cognitive effect.

Using electric fans in heatwaves may inadvertently cause more harm than good, but no available research on the subject has met Cochrane requirements, resulting in conclusions that cannot support or refute their use (doi:10.1002/14651858.CD009888). Fans could help increase heat loss if the temperature is below 35°C and the fan is not aimed directly at the person, but when temperatures rise above 35°C, a fan might actually bring about heat gain.

High sensitivity cardiac troponin (hs-cTn) is excellent at discriminating between patients with acute myocardial infarction and those with cardiac non-coronary artery disease (*Circulation* 2012;126:31-40, doi:10.1161/circulationaha.112.100867). In this prospective international study, the authors say that algorithms using ST-elevation and changes in hs-cTn within the first hour of presentation accurately separated patients cleanly into the two disease groups. These results were validated in an independent cohort of patients.

Three years after a randomised trial of deep brain stimulation for Parkinson’s disease, improvements in motor function were stable but quality of life had fallen slightly. The gradual decline observed in neurocognitive function is thought to reflect the underlying disease progression, and reinforces the importance of non-motor symptoms in determining quality of life, say the researchers (*Neurology* 2012;79:55-65, doi:10.1212/wnl.0b013e31825dcdc1).

Films and movies promote over three billion impressions of food, drink, or food retail establishments every year to young people. Researchers calculated the number of impressions by dividing annual receipts in the United



A three year old boy presented with unilateral, transient facial flushing after consuming various foods and liquids, which started shortly after birth. His mother had kept a strict food diary but could not pinpoint any specific triggers. Frey’s syndrome is characterised by facial flushing with or without hyperhidrosis in the distribution of the auriculotemporal nerve, induced by gustatory or occasionally tactile stimuli. It occurs from damage to the sympathetic pathways of the auriculotemporal nerve, which in this case was secondary to forceps injury at birth. Key features differentiating Frey’s syndrome from food allergy are the unilateral distribution of erythema, and the lack of pruritus, gastrointestinal symptoms, or association with specific foods.

Allan G Matthews (agzmatthews@doctors.org.uk), dermatology registrar, Nicholas J Wainwright, consultant dermatologist, Lanarkshire Centre for Dermatology, Monklands Hospital, Airdrie ML6 0JS, UK
Patient consent obtained.
Cite this as: *BMJ* 2012;345:e4957

States into average movie ticket prices, and then multiplying this by the number of brand appearances. In the US, people aged 12 to 18 years viewed over half of all impressions, with PG-13 rated movies containing 61.5% of impressions. Researchers say that in view of the current public health crisis of obesity, unhealthy marketing exposures to young people should be investigated further (*Journal of Public Health* 2012;34:245-52, doi:10.1093/pubmed/fdr089).

In a long term follow-up of children who had undergone endoscopic treatment of vesico-ureteric reflux, researchers found a low incidence of febrile urinary tract infections after successful correction of reflux. Girls and children with bladder or bowel dysfunction were at most risk for ongoing febrile infections, and older children who develop febrile urinary tract infections should specifically have their bladder and bowel assessed (*Journal of Pediatrics* 2012;160:1015-20, doi:10.1016/j.jpeds.2011.12.033).

A systematic review of acupuncture for irritable bowel syndrome included 17 methodologically sound randomised controlled trials. The researchers found no evidence of an improvement in symptom severity or quality of life with acupuncture relative to sham acupuncture. Among the trials that did not use placebo control, acupuncture was more effective than drug treatment and no specific treatment—but the researchers say this difference could reflect patients’ preferences and expectations.

Acupuncture performed no better than psychotherapy or use of the specific probiotic *Bifidobacterium infantis* 35624 (*American Journal of Gastroenterology* 2012;107:835-47, doi:10.1038/ajg.2012.66).

Where do *Escherichia coli* urinary tract infections (UTIs) come from? Recently, meat and animals have been implicated as potential sources, and a study in the *European Journal of Microbiology and Infectious Diseases* now provides solid proof of *E coli* UTI being a zoonosis, with direct links to animals grown for meat production (2012;31:1121-9, doi:10.1007/s10096-011-1417-5). Strains of *E coli* from patients with UTI and community dwelling people were closely clonally related to meat strains, and several human derived strains were also clonally inter-related.

Why are children subjected to computed tomography (CT) in the investigation of appendicitis, despite potential risks of associated radiation exposure? An investigation of what factors determine whether CT scanning is performed identified four independent predictive factors: initial presentation to a referring hospital, being female, increased time from symptom onset to presentation, and the presence of rebound tenderness. Children who first present to a paediatric emergency department or a hospital with paediatric surgeons were less likely to be scanned (*The American Surgeon* 2012; 78:716-21).

Cite this as: *BMJ* 2012;345:e4958