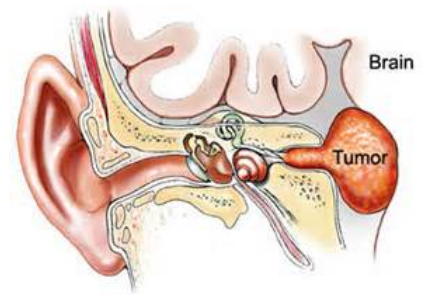


TEN HEALTH NEWS STORIES TODAY



ASPIRIN MAY HELP PATIENTS WITH ACOUSTIC NEUROMA

In some patients with a rare type of noncancerous brain tumor, aspirin may slow tumor growth. The tumor, published in a February issue of the journal *Otology and Neurotology*, approximately 700 people with the tumor (which is known as an acoustic neuroma) received aspirin. The use of aspirin in these 700 patients not only reduced the risk of 2 common comorbidities of an acoustic neuroma, hearing loss, and ringing in the ears, but the researchers found a reduced rate of tumor growth in aspirin users. Lead researcher, Dr Stankovic at the Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary, stated that the research indicates a possible role of aspirin in a therapeutic role for patients with acoustic neuroma.



INFERTILITY MAY CONTRIBUTE TO RELATIONSHIP DETERIORATION

According to researchers in Denmark, couples seeking medical treatment for infertility and later have a child are more likely to stay married than couples who do not ultimately have a child together. The study evaluation period, which was 12 years in length, found a 3-fold increase in the risk of divorce among infertile couples who were not helped by fertility-promoting treatments. The large study included 47,500 women over the timeframe between 1990 and 2006. Couples with fertility problems may need more help with marital counseling than other couples. The research could help couples recognize marriage problems that result from the stress of infertility preemptively--before these problems result in separation. The inability to procreate may increase levels of stress, anxiety, and reduce quality of life for infertile pairs. It is important to note, however, that the study did not definitively identify infertility as the cause of relationships ending.

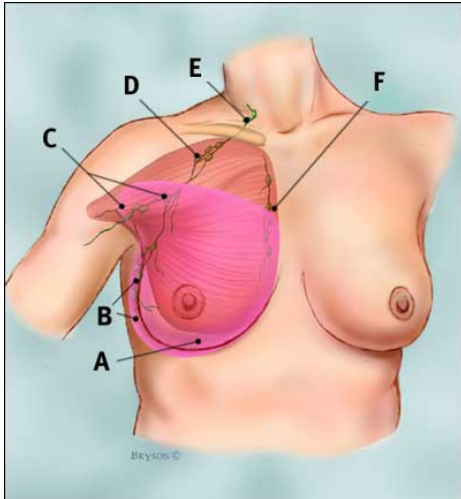


HOW DOES THE PERCEPTION OF OBESITY AS A DISEASE AFFECT PATIENTS?

In 2013, the American Medical Association (AMA) classified obesity as a disease. But some scientists believe that the AMA's ruling may negatively affect motivation levels among people with obesity by reducing motivation to improve dietary intake. Of more than 700 patients surveyed, a group of panelists (some of whom had obesity) first read about the ruling from the AMA and then answered a series of questions. The survey was conducted via an internet portal. After different groups of participants read various articles about health and weight issues, obese panelists who read an article that classified obesity as a disease were more likely to report lower levels of concern about weight and healthy diet than obese panelists who read a standard message about obesity. Obese panelists who read the article classifying obesity as a disease were also more likely to report satisfaction with their weight and body shape. Previous research shows that satisfaction with one's current body weight may lead to intake of foods with higher calorie density. Researchers speculated that the disease label of obesity, instead of highlighting the seriousness of the issue, may have implied that obesity cannot be reversed. Despite the potential effect on public perceptions among persons with obesity, labeling obesity as a disease may lead to broader insurance coverage of weight-loss medications that may improve outcomes and reduce health expenditures.



STUDY FINDS ABNORMAL CELL FINDINGS MAY REQUIRE MASTECTOMY IN MORE CASES



Mammography has long been used as a measure to promote early intervention in patients with breast cancer. A recent study found that 2 forms of breast cells, known as atypical lobular hyperplasia (ALH) and atypical ductal hyperplasia (ADH), are equally likely to develop into breast cancer. Before this research, many physicians recommended total mastectomy for patients with ALH, which was thought to have a worse prognosis than ADH. Researchers in Minnesota formed this conclusion after analyzing the results of a 12.5-year-long study of almost 700 women at the Mayo clinic who had abnormal cells. Of 330 women with ADH, 327 women with ALH, and 32 women with both ADH and ALH, 143 women ultimately developed breast cancer over 5 years of observation. Researchers found no significant difference

between the number of women who developed cancer in each group. The study shows that, of the 10% of biopsies that reveal atypical findings in terms of cell growth, the ADH and ALH findings are both important. Results of this study may lead to more women with atypical biopsies undergoing a mastectomy.

DRIVERS LESS RESPONSIVE TO UNFAMILIAR VEHICLES

In a study of motorists using a driving simulator, scientists have found that people are more aware of ordinary cars than less commonly encountered vehicles, such as motorcycles. The study lends credence to a statement made by many drivers who crash into motorcycles, "I just didn't see them." Researchers at Australian National University found that, of 40 adult drivers, study participants were less likely to respond quickly to dangerous situations involving buses and motorcycles. Simulations that included more motorcycles than buses led to detection of motorcycles at longer range than simulations that included more buses than motorcycles. Drivers should be on the lookout for motorcycles and other less-common vehicles to avoid devastating collisions.



IMMUNOTHERAPY REDUCES RISK IN PEANUT ALLERGY

Peanut allergies are an increasingly common problem for children in industrialized countries. Children and teens with allergies are at risk for anaphylactic reactions that could lead to devastating outcomes. Results with a new type of treatment--oral immunotherapy--may reduce the risk of developing anaphylaxis by slowly training the immune system not to react to peanut ingestion by triggering a potentially fatal allergic reaction. Of patients who underwent the trial 84 to 91% of children who ate very small amounts of a protein found in peanuts, slowly consumed more and more over the following 6 months, were able to eat up to 5 peanuts daily without harm. This immunotherapy option could lead to harm reduction for children with peanut allergies who may be accidentally exposed in school, work, or home environments. Although long-term side effects of immunotherapy have not been elucidated, researchers and physicians are optimistic that these results could lead to broader use of immunotherapy. However, pediatrician Gloria Riefkoh reported that further study is needed, and the study does not indicate that immunotherapy is ready for prime time. In a press release, Riefkoh stated, "I don't think it's ready for use in the general population." Despite the immunotherapy measures, approximately 20% of children who had undergone 26 weeks of immunotherapy experienced nausea, vomiting, hives, wheezing or oral itching in response to exposure. One child required treatment with epinephrine. Immunotherapy may help reduce the risk of life-threatening reactions in patients with severe forms of peanut allergy--buying caregivers and patients more time in an emergency situation.



ANTIOXIDANTS AND LUNG CANCER: A POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS COMBINATION

According to a study in mice, antioxidant use may accelerate the progression of lung cancer. In mice with lung cancer, vitamin E intake approximately doubled the likelihood of death over a given period of time and promoted tumor growth in a dose-dependent manner. Researchers theorize that reducing DNA damage may actually increase the risk of cancer. When cells are damaged by tobacco smoke, or other environmental factors, the body kills cells that are damaged. By reducing the amount of damage to cells through antioxidant use, the body is less likely to destroy cells with DNA errors. As a result, extra antioxidant intake may promote cancer growth. Although it is important to note that research in mice does not always correlate with similar results in humans, researchers have some basis for believing a similar effect may occur in humans. During the 1980s and 1990s, study of beta-carotene, vitamin A and vitamin E in patients who smoked cigarettes revealed an association between vitamin use and a greater incidence of lung cancers. These results may not be true of all cancers, however, since cancer is a heterogeneous disease. For now, researchers are recommending against antioxidant use in patients with lung cancer and patients who are at risk for lung cancer, such as smokers.

ADHD AND MOTORVEHICLE ACCIDENT RISK

A large study in Sweden found that people with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) were more likely to be involved in a serious car accident than men with treated ADHD. The study indicates that patients with ADHD, including beginning drivers, are at greater risk of harm to themselves and others. The study involved more than 17,000 people between the ages of 18 and 46. The analysis of data collected between 2006 and 2009 found that women with ADHD were 45% more likely to be involved in a crash and men with ADHD were 47% more likely to be involved in a crash than people without ADHD. Study authors selected for patients with ADHD by analyzing a prescription database, and identifying patients who had received an ADHD-specific drug in the previous 6 months. Although men who had access to medication and took medication were 58% less likely to be involved in a crash when medicated, women with ADHD did not benefit from medication use in terms of motorvehicle accident risk. Defensive driving remains an important part of harm reduction, both to patients with ADHD and to the general public.

ARE COUPONS INCENTIVIZING LOWER DIETARY QUALITY?

Coupons may do more harm than good when it comes to trimming your waistline, according to a new study from the University of California, San Francisco, School of Medicine. Healthy foods like lean meats, low-fat dairy products, fresh fruits, and vegetables are seldom or never offered at sale prices. In press release, lead study author, Hilary Seligman stated, "When junk foods are the foods stores are lowering the prices of, we shouldn't be surprised that more of them are purchased.". Seligman and colleagues analyzed the nutritional value of food offered at a discount at 6 major grocery stores. Coupons reducing the prices of processed foods, crackers, chips, and deserts accounted for 1 in 4 of over 1000 coupons involved in the study. Prepared meals, frozen dinners, sugary juices or sodas, high-sugar breakfast cereals, and fatty condiments were also common items offered at a price reduction. Healthier items, such as canned or frozen fruits or vegetables accounted for just 3% of coupons. Processed foods offer grocery stores higher profit margins than other foods. As a result, these processed foods are offered at a discount by manufacturers. The processed food discounts, combined with the food cost allotment of only \$4.50 per person per day with government assistance places people in low income brackets at high risk for diet-related diseases, such as obesity, diabetes, and atherosclerosis. Coupons may be contributing to this trend.

SMOKING RATES FALL AMONG NURSES

Nurses are quitting smoking, sending a clear message to patients about quitting. Smoking rates among registered nurses in the United States fell from 7% to 11% in the years between 2003 and 2011. The 36% reduction contrasts with the lower, 13% decline in smoking rates among the general population over the same period of time. Among health care professionals, physicians are the least likely to smoke, with just 2% admitting to the habit. By contrast, nearly 1 in 4 licensed practical nurses are still smoking. ■

