



**A 53 year old man with a four week history of productive cough and right sided chest pain**  
Try the picture quiz in **ENDGAMES**, p 983

Does the number of free nicotine patches given to smokers affect quit rates? The answer is no. The lure of free nicotine replacement therapy can be a cost effective marketing strategy to persuade smokers to call a telephone quitline, but quit rates for those given four week supplies of patches did not differ significantly from those given six or eight weeks' supply. An intention to treat analysis of 12 month quit rates found a similar pattern (*BMC Public Health* 2010;10:181, doi:10.1186/1471-2458-10-181).

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) can be predicted by early responses of the heart rate to standardised pictures of trauma, according to *Psychosomatic Medicine* (2010;72:301-8, doi:10.1097/PSY.0b013e3181d07db8). One month after experiencing a motor vehicle accident or physical assault, survivors with PTSD showed greater heart rate responses to trauma related pictures than those without PTSD. They did not have the same increased response to neutral pictures or those that depicted general threat. The degree of heart rate response predicted the severity of PTSD at one and six months.

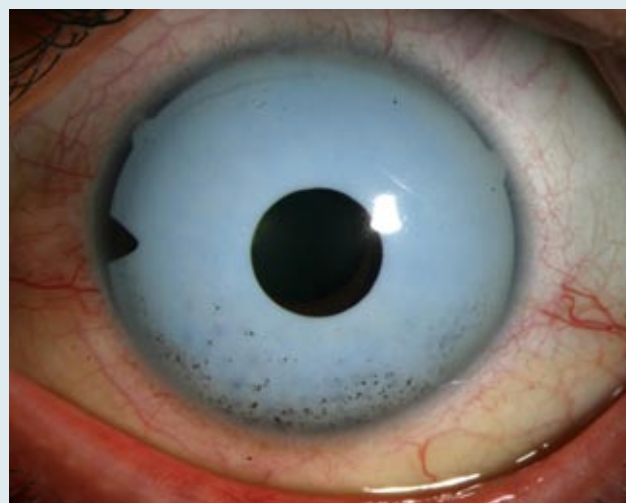
Why do patients with cancer visit emergency departments near the end of life? Such visits are thought to indicate poor quality cancer care, and for patients they can be distressing, exhausting, and disruptive. A Canadian study of terminally ill patients reports that the most common reasons for attending the emergency department were abdominal pain, dyspnoea, malaise, fatigue, pneumonia, and pleural effusion, although it's likely that most of the patients had complex problems. Most of these visits could be avoided if alternative dedicated services were available (*CMAJ* 2010;182:563-8, doi:10.1503/cmaj.091187).

HIV positive men on antiretroviral treatment in South Africa report that their optimism about the future is tempered greatly by their concern about not being able to meet gender related expectations about work and family life. Alcohol use, for example, is discouraged during treatment, and many men say they find this change so difficult to make that they delay treatment while trying to control their alcohol intake, without seeking professional support. On the other hand they reported feeling threatened by alcohol abuse in relatives—fearing insults, violence, and accidental disclosure of their HIV status (*AIDS Care* 2010;22:355-60, doi:10.1080/09540120903111536).

A 30 year old Brazilian woman presented with a red, sore left eye. She had recently undergone bilateral intraocular iris implant surgery in Panama to change her eye colour for cosmetic reasons. We found pigment deposits on her corneal endothelium and mild bilateral anterior uveitis. Her intraocular pressures were normal, possibly because she had been advised by the operating surgeon to use brimonidine 0.2% three times a day for life. Cosmetic intraocular iris implantation is becoming popular in some parts of the world but little information is available about its safety and long term effects. Uveitis, glaucoma, and corneal decompensation are likely complications. Patients should be told about the possible risks and the need for lifelong follow-up.

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Patient consent obtained.  
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The popularity of homoeopathy for fibromyalgia is high, but its effectiveness remains unproved (*Clinical Rheumatology* 2010;29:457-64, doi:10.1007/s10067-009-1361-2). A systematic review of homoeopathy as a symptomatic treatment for fibromyalgia identified four randomised controlled trials in six databases. All the trials were seriously flawed, yet all of them suggested that homoeopathy was better than control interventions. The authors call for studies that minimise bias more effectively and allow for independent replication.

Foods cooked at high temperatures feature heavily in Western diets. A study that compared a diet of highly heat treated food with one of steamed food found that after a month of the heat treated diet, insulin sensitivity was significantly lowered, as were plasma levels of omega-3 fatty acids and vitamins C and E, while cholesterol and triglycerides increased. The results suggest that diets based on highly heat treated food increase markers associated with enhanced risk of type 2 diabetes and heart disease in healthy people (*American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* 2010;91:1220-6, doi:10.3945/ajcn.2009.28737).

Coffee drinking, on the other hand, seems to have a protective effect in Japanese women (*Journal of Nutrition* 2010;140:1007-13, doi:10.3945/jn.109.109314). Over 10 years of follow-up, inverse associations between coffee consumption and death from all causes and from heart disease were seen in women, but not in men. Death from cancer was not related to coffee drinking in either sex, except possibly for colorectal cancer in women. Minerva was amused to read the authors' conclusion that coffee may have favourable effects on morality from all causes in women—but she thinks that was a typing error.

Music training can improve the perception of pitch in children with pre-lingual deafness who have cochlear implants. Duration of music training positively correlated with the ability to correctly identify differences in pitch; pitch perception was better in children aged over six than in younger children, in whom the effect of musical training on this skill was more strongly noted. Longitudinal follow-up is needed to show whether improvements in musical skills can be measured by auditory evoked potentials, but the results do suggest that early structured training in music perception would benefit such children (*Pediatrics* 2010;125:e793-800, doi:10.1542/peds.2008-3620).

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