

## "DC" On-Line

Brian Sutton, DC

### Neurological Disorders and Gluten

Doctors at the Royal Hallamshire Hospital in Sheffield, England have discovered a strong link between some unidentifiable neurological disorders and gluten sensitivity. They tested patients with a number of disorders: weakness, muscular in-coordination, and other neurological symptoms of unknown etiology. The researchers found that 57 percent of the subjects had antibodies to gliadin, a component of the gluten found in wheat, rye and barley. They conjecture that the anti-gliadin antibodies can affect nerve cells, possibly creating permanent damage. One of the researchers suggests screening all patients with vague neurological symptoms for gluten sensitivity.<sup>1</sup>

1. Reuter, Feb. 8, 1996.

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### Surgeon Spreads Hepatitis

A physician training for thoracic surgery in two Los Angeles hospitals is being blamed for unknowingly infecting 13 percent of his patients with the hepatitis B virus. What is so unusual about this case is that experts cannot understand how it happened. All the usual precautions and protocols were taken. Despite the fact that he wore gloves and was careful not to cut himself, among other measures, patients from 14 months to 83 years of age were infected.<sup>2</sup> Infection control officials fear that similar cases may be happening more often than is recognized. It is thought that one percent of U.S. surgeons are infected with the virus. Obstetricians are another group of physicians that appear to be especially involved in the spread of hepatitis B among hospital patients.<sup>3</sup>

2. New England Journal of Medicine, Feb. 29, 1996.

3. Associated Press, Feb. 28, 1996.

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### Internists Attack Cholesterol Screenings

The American College of Physicians, a large group of internal medicine specialists, is opposing routine cholesterol screening of a large segment of the population. They have published new guidelines in the Annals of Internal Medicine<sup>4</sup> that recommend against cholesterol screenings (unless the patient is at a high risk for cardiovascular disease) in men younger than 35, women younger than 45, and anyone 65 years and older. They say that such patients will too likely be exposed to therapeutic risks without sufficient corresponding and proven benefits of treatment. A spokesman for the National Cholesterol Education Program, who opposes the new guidelines said, "Basically what they're saying is physicians can't be trusted, because they're all going to jump to

drugs."<sup>5</sup>

4. AIM, March 1, 1996.

5. Associated Press, March 1, 1996.

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### False Alarms from Fetal Monitors

Electronic fetal monitoring, a routine procedure in hospital delivery rooms, is practically worthless according to research published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*.<sup>6</sup> Researchers found that 99.8 percent of the fetal distress signs turn out to be false alarms, but not before spurring various invasive procedures such as Cesarean operations. About four percent of C-section patients experience serious complications. The intent of the surgery is to prevent complications of oxygen deprivation, such as cerebral palsy, but the same study finds that the operation may not be justified. The cerebral palsy incidence was the same in C-section babies as it was in those delivered vaginally. They note that nearly 10 percent of all babies will show an abnormal appearing heartbeat during delivery, with no untoward outcome.

6. NEJM, March 7, 1996.

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### Save the Tooth

London dentists note that it is possible to re-implant a tooth that has been knocked out. It needs to be replaced in its socket as soon as possible after the trauma, before the root has dried out. If you'd rather have it done by a professional, keep it moist, preferably by dropping it into a glass of milk, until you can get to a dentist. They caution, though, against attempting to replace a child's baby tooth, as it could damage the underlying permanent dentition.<sup>7</sup>

7. British Medical Journal, March 2, 1996.

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### Ginger Inhibits Tumors

A dermatologist reporting in the journal *Cancer Research*<sup>8</sup> says that something about ginger root seems to offer protection from skin cancer. He reports that when ginger was applied to the skin of mice 30 minutes before exposure to a potent carcinogen, the mice showed a "remarkable" resistance to cancer and a lowered production of enzymes associated with tumor formation. The mechanism of action is not known, and researchers predict it will be about 10 years before we know if the effect is similar in humans.

8. *Cancer Research*, March 1, 1996.

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### Cleft Lip and Tobacco

A study from the California Birth Defects Monitoring Program in Emeryville, California is linking oral birth defects to moms who smoke during pregnancy. The study examined a certain variation of

the transforming growth factor alpha gene (TGFA), thought to be involved in mouth development. The uncommon form of TGFA has previously been linked to cleft lip and palate. However, this study finds that the risk of defects in these babies is higher only when the mother smokes during the pregnancy; children born to nonsmoking mothers show no increased incidence of the oral deformity even when they have this "defective" gene. In addition, there appears to be some evidence that tobacco can create a similar effect even when the gene is "normal."<sup>9</sup>

9. American Journal of Human Genetics, March 1, 1996.

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#### Knee Infections from the Dentist

Researchers from Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore are warning that dental work might cause problems in patients with artificial knee implants. Doctors reviewing 3,500 knee replacement surgeries found a significant increase in subsequent infections around the knee following dental procedures. They did, in fact, also find that the infective agents were organisms generally found in the mouth. They have no explanation for the phenomenon.<sup>10</sup>

10. Presented at the annual meeting of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons in Atlanta, February, 1996.

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#### Carpal Tunnel Exercises

A professor of orthopedics<sup>11</sup> presented a set of exercises to the February meeting of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons designed to minimize carpal tunnel syndrome. The five-minute exercises decreased pressure on the median nerve substantially. He said that the following regimen is recommended before starting work each day, and immediately after each break:<sup>12</sup>

- Extend your arms straight out in front of your body, supinate your arms and hyperextend your wrists, holding for five seconds. Then straighten your wrists and relax your fingers for another five seconds.
- Clench your fists for five seconds.
- Pronate your arms, then flex your still-clenched wrists for five seconds. Straighten your wrists and relax your fingers for another five seconds.
- Repeat the above steps 10 times, then let your arms hang at your side and loosely shake them for a few seconds.

11. Dr. Houshang Seradge, University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center.

12. United Press, February 25, 1996.

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## Urine Has Anti-Cancer Properties?

This may be a wee bit hard for some of you to swallow, but a Chinese researcher<sup>13</sup> has presented findings that support many people's contention that human urine contains healing properties. He says that the protein antineoplaston, found in urine, inhibited malignant cancer cell growth in his experiments. Another doctor<sup>14</sup> studied 1,752 people who drank, gargled, or massaged themselves with their own urine to treat diabetes, hepatitis B, influenza, and cancer. He also reported favorable results, nearly 73 percent in the cancer patient group. These presentations were part of a three-day World Conference on auto-urine therapy in India this past February.

13. Dr. Ming Chen Liao of Long Life Biomedical Co. Ltd, Western Hefei, China.

14. Dr. Shigeyuri Arai of Japan's Miracle Cup of Life Institute.

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## Legg-Perthes Disease and Smoking

Researchers studying 172 children with the Legg-Perthes hip joint disease report that the condition appears to be much more prevalent in children who have parents who smoke. The problem is found in one out of every 1,200 children, but when someone in the child's household smokes, the risk rises to one in 100. It is thought that nicotine interferes with hip development by constricting the blood vessels in certain sensitive children.<sup>15</sup>

15. United Press, February 24, 1996.

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## Trampolines Traumatize Tots

Forty thousand children were taken to hospital emergency rooms during 1994 for injuries sustained in trampoline accidents, according to a pediatric researcher.<sup>16</sup> He found that forearm fractures are the most common trampoline injury, but many tibias are fractured as well, especially in children less than eight years old. Other common fractures involve the elbow, thigh, and hands. He recommends keeping kids off the devices.

16. Dr. Dale Blasier of Arkansas Children's Hospital in Little Rock.

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