

# CONTENTS *Annals of Internal Medicine*

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## ARTICLES

### Massage Therapy versus Simple Touch to Improve Pain and Mood in Patients with Advanced Cancer. A Randomized Trial 369

J.S. Kutner, M.C. Smith, L. Corbin, L. Hemphill, K. Benton, B.K. Mellis, B. Beaty, S. Felton, T.E. Yamashita, L.L. Bryant, and D.L. Fairclough

Little is known about the effectiveness of massage in managing pain during palliative care. Kutner and colleagues randomly assigned 380 patients with advanced cancer to either massage therapy or simple-touch sessions. Pain and mood improved more after massage therapy than after simple touch, but the 2 treatments had equal effects on pain, quality of life, and analgesic use as measured over 3 weeks. Adverse effects were infrequent and similar in both groups.

Summary for Patients 1-38

### Risk for Death Associated with Medications for Recently Diagnosed Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease 380

T.A. Lee, A.S. Pickard, D.H. Au, B. Bartle, and K.B. Weiss

In this large case-control study, Lee and coworkers measured the association between medications and risk for death in veterans with newly diagnosed chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. Inhaled corticosteroids were associated with decreased risk for death, whereas theophylline and ipratropium were associated with increased risk for respiratory and cardiovascular death, respectively.

### Proton-Pump Inhibitor Use and the Risk for Community-Acquired Pneumonia 391

M. Sarkar, S. Hennessy, and Y.X. Yang

Some studies suggest that proton-pump inhibitors (PPIs) increase risk for community-acquired pneumonia (CAP). In this large, nested case-control study of adults in general practices in the United Kingdom, long-term PPI use was not associated with increased risk for CAP. However, recently started PPI therapy was associated with increased CAP risk: The adjusted odds ratios for CAP occurring after starting PPIs within 2, 7, and 14 days of CAP diagnosis were 6.5, 3.8, and 3.2, respectively.

### Brief Communication: The Relationship of Regression of Cirrhosis to Outcome in Patients with Chronic Hepatitis C 399

V. Mallet, H. Gilgenkrantz, J. Serpaggi, V. Verkarre, A. Vallet-Pichard, H. Fontaine, and S. Pol

Mallet and associates studied regression of liver cirrhosis in 96 patients with chronic hepatitis C and biopsy-proven cirrhosis after treatment with an interferon-based regimen. Eighteen patients had biopsy-proven regression of cirrhosis. These patients had better 10-year survival rates than did patients without regression (100% vs. 74%). The study suggests that cirrhosis may be reversible in some patients with chronic hepatitis C.

## CLINICAL GUIDELINES

### Pharmacologic Treatment of Low Bone Density or Osteoporosis to Prevent Fractures: A Clinical Practice Guideline from the American College of Physicians 404

A. Qaseem, V. Snow, P. Shekelle, R. Hopkins Jr., M.A. Forciea, and D.K. Owens, for the Clinical Efficacy Assessment Subcommittee of the American College of Physicians

This guideline presents current evidence on pharmacologic treatments to prevent fractures in men and women with low bone density or osteoporosis. The American College of Physicians recommends that clinicians offer pharmacologic treatment to men and women with osteoporosis or a history of fragility fractures. Physicians should consider pharmacologic treatment for men and women at risk for osteoporosis. When choosing among pharmacologic treatments for osteoporosis, physicians should make a patient-specific assessment of their potential harms and benefits.

Summary for Patients 1-46

## ACADEMIA AND CLINIC

### Educational Debt and Reported Career Plans among Internal Medicine Residents 416

F.S. McDonald, C.P. West, C. Popkave, and J.C. Kolars

McDonald and colleagues surveyed 22 653 internal medicine residents in their final year of residency to determine the relationship between educational debt and reported career plans. They found that the amount of educational debt is associated with such plans. These associations are more pronounced for U.S. medical graduates than for international medical graduates.

Continued on page I-6

## HISTORY OF MEDICINE

### Whither Prometheus' Liver? Greek Myth and the Science of Regeneration 421

C. Power and J.E.J. Rasko

This myth of Prometheus—the Greek god whose immortal liver was feasted on day after day by Zeus' eagle—invariably provokes the question: Did the ancient Greeks know about the liver's amazing capacity for self-repair? Power and Rasko address this question by exploring the origins of Greek myth and medicine, examining the general theme of regeneration in Greek mythology, and surveying several scholarly interpretations of Prometheus' torture.

## EDITORIALS

### Antiviral Treatment for Hepatitis C Cirrhosis: Is the Effort Justified? 427

M. Black and R. Thomas

Many consider treatment of cirrhotic patients too late in the natural history of progressive liver disease to be worthwhile. The concept of treating cirrhotic patients, however, has recently gained popularity. Viral eradication is sometimes accompanied by reversal of cirrhosis, as Mallet and colleagues document in this issue. They demonstrate that the reported improvement in histology is associated with a reduction in cirrhosis-related complications and prolonged survival.

### When Money Doesn't Change Everything 429

A. Grover

In this issue, McDonald and colleagues demonstrate the relationship between student debt and plans for specialization among internal medicine residents. We may need to look beyond financial issues to understand what attracts physicians to more specialized areas of practice and work to address not only income but also how general internists and specialists practice medicine and what this means for our patients.

## ON BEING A DOCTOR

### The Measure of the Man 431

C.A. Wittnam

In the Yellowstone River Valley of Montana, a handshake is still important. Here, handshakes are used to settle the sale of land, timber, and cattle and are always offered in greeting and in farewell. Montanans believe that a handshake provides important information about a person's character, and it is never taken lightly.

### Listening to Skulls 433

C. Thoman

There on the far wall, skulls peered down. Rows and rows and rows of human skulls. Each sat neatly next to the other, as if politely decapitated to take its place on the wall. They were eclectic and haunting. Who had they been? How had their bones ended up as part of this one man's personal collection?

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P. Rousseau

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The Best New Evidence for Patient Care

Cover photograph by Charles Rossi

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