Medical Tid Bits...

Women and Coronary Disease: Nanette K. Wenger MD, FACC

Coronary heart disease is the largest single killer of American women: Here are some of the disturbing statistics:

a. Every two minutes a woman in the U.S. dies from coronary heart disease...

b. 44% of the women who have a heart attack die within a year...

c. 63% of women who die suddenly from coronary disease have not had previous coronary symptoms

da. Afro-American women have a higher mortality from cardiovascular disease than white women, with their death rates being as much as 67% higher.

e. A recent Gallup poll: 40% of U.S. women fear dying from breast cancer although only 4% actually die from breast cancer...At least one third of all American women will die of heart disease compared with one of every 27 who will die from breast cancer.

Pregnant Pause: Doctors in Puerto Rico suggest that some cases of severe morning sickness may be due to Bacterium H. Pylori: 89% of pregnant women with intense nausea tested positive for H. Pylori.

Annual Vacations: A study of 12,866 men at risk for cardiac problems shows that men who took annual vacations were 17% less likely to die over a 9 year period, than those who skipped vacations and 32% less likely to die of heart disease. (U of Pittsburgh Researchers and the State of University of New York).

GI Bleeding: The combinations of SSRI's (e.g., Prozac, Zoloft, or Paxil) with aspirin, ibuprofen, and other non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs taken regularly may cause serious stomach bleeding.

ACE that Cough!: Irritating dry coughs are a common side effect of ACE inhibitors...a small study has found that 256 mg of iron daily improved the cough in 80% of cases.

BAYCOL: The popular cholesterol lowering drug BAYCOL (Bayer) has been pulled off the market after being linked to 31 U.S. deaths. Reports of muscle destruction was about ten times as common with BAYCOL.

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**Losing a few pounds and walking 30 minutes a day are goals well within the reach of everyone.

Unnecessary Appendectomies: Despite all the high tech diagnostic tools, viz CT scans, and laparoscopic exams, an inflamed appendix is difficult to diagnose. Each year 40,000 unnecessary appendectomies are performed because of the difficulty visualizing the appendix especially in women.

Playing Chicken: The routine use of antibiotics in livestock create healthier and fatter animals, but the same antibiotics become resistant to bacteria found in our intestines making treatment difficult.

How to Deal with Anxiety: With the anthrax scare and a war with no end in sight, a lot of people are feeling anxious these days. Here are some recommendations:

a. First try Yoga or hot baths—if it doesn't work and the anxiety persists for weeks, Richard Friedman, psychiatrist and director of the Psycho-Pharmacology clinic at New York Weil Cornell Medical Center in Manhattan recommends as follows:

b. Don't avoid the reaction, talk to your friends and family.

c. Try to relax—but no alcohol...try deep breathing, exercise, Yoga, or meditation...hot baths, and cups of herbal tea.

d. If the anxiety persists, see a professional who may prescribe Paxil (which takes weeks to work) or benzoazepines, such as Valium, Xanax, Avitan, or Klonopin which work within minutes, not weeks.

e. If the anxiety is causing insomnia, then Halcion, Ambien, and Restoril can be used with caution.

Breast Self Exam: Now comes word that breast self exam may not be so helpful...after reviewing eight major studies, a Canadian task force concluded that there is little evidence that the technique saves lives...Indeed the data seems to indicate that breast self exams do more harm and prompts unnecessary testing...Two of the studies were in China and Russia which do not have access to the most advanced diagnostic techniques.

Meanwhile there is a body of evidence that the best way to detect breast cancer is a mammogram and annual exam by a physician...The most important thing is to report unusual changes to your doctor.

Walker Watch: The American Academy of Pediatrics feels that the 3 million walkers that American parents buy for their infants each year may do more harm than good. There is no evidence that the devices help infants learn to walk independently...On the contrary, pediatricians feel that the walkers delay normal motor development and cause serious injury and even death...

Stressed Out: Researchers at London's Imperial College say that anxiety during pregnancy can double the risk of having a hyperactive child, possibly due to exposure to the stress hormone cortisol...

Folic Acid: Two years after folic acid was added to many grain products in the U.S. certain birth defects of the brain and spine are down 19%. Enriched food provides a quarter of the 400 micrograms a day women of childbearing age need...The rest can come from supplements, hyperfortified cereals and leafy green vegetables.

HIV/AIDS: The tab for treating and preventing HIV/AIDS in the world’s poorest countries could run as high as $9.2 billion a year, according to the latest U.N. figures...Current expenditure: About $1.8 billion. About 4 billion is needed in Sub-Saharan Africa where more than 20% of the adult population is infected.

ECSTASY: The National Institute on Drug Abuse has evidence that the club drug Ecstasy triggers semipermanent memory loss and persistent behavioral changes even after casual use.
Fat Burner Pills: These supplements have become a multimillion dollar industry by promising to speed up metabolism and burn away fat. Thanks to a marketing blitz, these products have become a billion dollar industry. But there are few or any studies in the scientific literature showing that these supplements can accomplish this...What’s distressing is that although they don’t work, they are not risk free...

Most contain ephedra (a Chinese herb known as MAHUANG or ephedrine). The potential side effects include heart attacks, strokes, seizures, psychosis, and death. More dangerous still are variants containing combinations of ephedrine, caffeine, pseudoephedrine, and norepinephrine used with over the counter cold remedies...

Baby Soy: Infants on soy bean formula grow up to be as healthy as the standard cow derived formula...The soy’s high level of photoestrogen (which act like female sex hormones could affect development). Experts say breast milk is still the best...

Oral Advice: A study investigating HIV transmission from oral sex shows no cases...Unprotected oral sex with infected partners is safer than anal or vaginal sex with condom...But protected oral sex is certainly safest...

Out of Control: Almost one-third of the estimated 42 million Americans with high blood pressure don’t know they have the condition. Worse, 70% have seen a physician only three times in the past year and 90% have insurance.

Potpourri...

Two men discussing a friend’s ailment: “I heard Joe’s laid up in bed with back pain. The doctor told him it’s his “psychotic nerve.””

“Yeah! I hear the pain gets so bad, it drives you crazy.”

Female patient to her GP: “Can you refer me to a gynnecologist?”

Father on hearing the doctor’s diagnosis of his child’s condition: “I don’t understand how he could have chicken pox. We had his annihilated when he was younger…”

Woman to doctor: I have been feeling absolutely marvelous since starting these frolic acid tablets...

Arthritis of the Penis:

My memories of the most demanding rotation of my residence training boils down to just a few events...Poor Mr. Smith had suffered a stroke the previous night. Although he was comatose his dutiful and caring wife was always at his side...

I tried to avoid invading one of Mr. Smith’s few remaining orifices with a condom catheter in lieu of an indwelling catheter, but we didn’t have a small enough condom catheter. The one we were using kept falling off...

In the most diplomatic manner, I explained: “Due to the inadequacy of the volume of penile tissue, we were unable to keep the catheter on...And therefore we lost track of the urinary output…”

Mrs. Smith pitched in. “Oh well, that’s because he had arthritis of the penis…” I muttered to the nurse, “I bet that’s what he told her when it was stiff in the mornings…”

Dr. Carolyn Lane

A doctor answered the phone and heard the familiar voice of a colleague saying, “We need a fourth for poker…”

“I’ll be right over” the doctor answered...

As he was putting on his coat, his wife asked, “Is it serious?”

“Oh yes!” the doctor answered gravely, “In fact there are three doctors there already!”

During a Papal visit to Cuba, the Pope was strolling along the beach with Fidel Castro when the wind suddenly blew His Holiness’s hat into the ocean. Fidel retrieved it for Him by walking across the water...The next day the newspaper headlines in Cuba read: “Pope Declares Castro Successor to Jesus.”

The Vatican issued the statement, “Pope Calls Hat Back with Divine Power” and the Miami paper declared, “Fidel Can’t Even Swim!”

The Philippine Medical Association of Hawaii Research Award

PMAH offers cash prizes of $400 (first place) and $200 (second place) for scientific research about Hawaii Filipinos. The material must be presented (podium) at the March 2002 Quarterly Meeting of the Association, to be held on Oahu.

You are encouraged to submit abstracts describing original work about Hawaii Filipinos. The competition is open to physicians, medical students, nurses, therapists, pharmacists, students of social work and public health, and all other medical or paramedical professions. The author/s may be in practice or training. Material previously presented or published elsewhere is acceptable.

Contact the following for abstract submission forms:

Dr. Theresa Danao-Camara
PMAH CME
1212 Nuuanu St., 2405
Honolulu, HI 96817
Ph: 522-3863

Abstracts must be received by mail by January 31, 2002.

Selection will be performed by a committee of PMAH members based on originality, application to the Filipino population in Hawaii, and contribution to the medical literature. You will be notified by mail if your abstract has been selected for presentation by February 15, 2002.

Until There's a Cure, There's the American Diabetes Association