Youth Is The Happiest Time Of All, But Only Age Knows It.

The recent study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association regarding hormone replacement therapy (HRT) revealed that there isn’t a fountain of youth, and the pharmaceutical people must modify their ads. For eye surgeons, the finding of dry eye syndrome (DES) has been suspected as a concomitant of hormonal changes for some time. The report shows that the use of estrogen/progesterin supplements to help women maintain bone density and hold back heart disease might increase the risk of breast cancer. Additionally, the data suggest that women who are on HRT, especially estrogen alone, are more likely to develop dry eye problems. Patients must be advised of the risks when we prescribe. Yes, it’s a cruel world, and chasing the ghost of Ponce de Leon appears as fruitless as ever.

“It Seems To Me I’ve Heard That Song Before…”

Reporting to his medical colleagues, the executive director called for vigorous action “to stop the plague from spreading across the nation.” He wasn’t referring to Alzheimer’s Disease, cancer, or diabetes, but instead was referring to the “plague” of psychologists in New Mexico who won the power to write prescriptions for some psychiatric medications. For both psychiatrists and psychologists, the law which took effect July 1st, is a precedent setter, and will stoke the fires in at least a dozen other states where the issue has been introduced. They all want to practice medicine; psychologists, optometrists, naturopaths, chiropractors, audiologists, podiatrists, phrenologists and faith healers. If our politicians continue to sell their votes, and increasingly open the gates for medical impersonators, we shall eventually have the crazy quilt medical care of the early 1900s. The rhetoric is always the same whenever the pretenders invade the medical field - they claim the MDs are needlessly protecting their turf and fear competition, while the physicians speak out for education and patient safety. There is after all one clear path to curtail pretending - go to medical school.

“Welcome To The Friendly Skies! This Is Wyatt Earp From The Flight Deck”

Transportation Secretary Norman Mineta testified before Congress that it would cost $860 million to set up a training program to arm airline pilots. The House has approved a measure 310 to 113 allowing pilots to carry guns despite concerns by some safety experts and the Bush administration. Could pilots safely land a plane while having a shot-out during a hijack attempt? And as a practical issue, how many pilots would qualify to carry guns under the tight training requirements which the government has already specified for federal air marshals? Senate Commerce Committee Chairman Ernest Hollings is opposed saying, “pilots should close the cockpit door and keep it closed.” So far, the measure has 24 supporters in the Senate, and the sponsor of the bill, Conrad Burns of Montana, said the measure would pass if a vote were held on the Senate floor.

Money Talks, But It Doesn’t Always Tell The Truth.

In a landmark case in North Carolina, the state medical board removed the license of a Florida neurosurgeon who provided ugly expert testimony for the plaintiff in a malpractice case. The board stated that the doctor had engaged in “unprofessional conduct” when he misstated the facts of the case, and provided an erroneous description of the standard of care. While the attorney for the plaintiff noted that doctors would now be afraid to provide expert testimony for fear of medical board penalty, many doctors believe the action will serve to curb the hired guns (medical whores) who are willing to provide whatever testimony the plaintiff’s attorney wants. The American Medical Association has long wanted to insure that expert medical testimony is accurate and based upon accepted scientific facts and principles. Yank Coble, M.D. AMA President, said that expert medical witnesses testifying to facts and science will not fear offering testimony.

Flesh Eating Bacteria Don’t Belong On The Menu.

According to the Food and Drug Administration, 16% (one out of six) of hamburger lovers want their burger rare or pink in the middle. Unfortunately, E. coli, that common beef contaminant generating out of cow manure, doesn’t give up until the meat reaches 160 degrees F., which pink burgers do not. E. coli was relatively unrecognized as a problem until 1993 when four children died with an outbreak tied to Jack in the Box burgers. America’s meatpackers won’t guarantee that their ground beef is free of E. coli, so it makes sense to want well done burgers. Irradiation of ground beef will kill the bacteria, but few retailers want to carry it. The gamma rays or electron beams can cause the fat in ground beef to smell bad with an odor like a wet dog. Moral: turn your charcoal burger into a hockey puck. It won’t taste like much, so add a generous layer of mustard, onions, relish, cheese, lettuce, catsup, pickles and tomatoes.

Why No One Should Be Allowed Out Any More.

Dengue fever? Forget it, baby, now we can worry about West Nile fever. The elderly and those with weakened immune systems are most vulnerable. Seven fatalities have been reported in Louisiana alone this summer from viral encephalitis. Horses have also been fatally infected. It is a weird mosquito-borne disease in which birds are the apparent reservoir. Most of the infected birds survive, and carry the virus. Symptoms usually occur between five and fifteen days after the bite. The virus causes flu-like symptoms, but many victims show only minimal illness or no reaction other than positive antibodies. A very small number develop fatal neurological-encephalitis. The vector is the common culex pipiens mosquito busily carrying the disease from bird to human. No human to human transmission has been reported. Migrating out of Africa, the virus was first diagnosed in the 1930s. It traveled to Europe in the 1950s, and the first USA case was reported in New York in 1999. So far, the disease has produced 120 known cases this year, has been found in 35 states and Washington D.C., moving as far as Colorado and Wyoming in its travel westward. Current death count is up to twelve. Since migrating birds have been the source of infection, our islands appear safe for the present. Carry your insect repellent when headed to the mainland, especially Louisiana.

The Electronic Leash; One More Sign That Your Life Belongs To Others.

...We are locked inside the cyber-world of screen blips, computer chips, magnetic strips, and paper slips. In yet another intrusion, General Motors is conducting experiments wherein an electronic chip is embedded in your auto which can be scanned at various locations. For example, drive through the fast food restaurant, order your meal. The scanner records your visit, and the bill is paid directly from your checking account. This is not mere day-dreaming or speculation, the technology is here, the devices are under study, and the system is ready for application. Apparently, the scheme of these geniuses is to turn your auto into a rolling bar-graph debit card - fast food, stop and shop, gasoline, car repair - whatever. Privacy and actual cash are disappearing media. Moreover, the chip allows GM to locate the auto at any time wherever it is in the world, which should make our paranoid attorney general happy with one more way to spy on Americans.

Pills - Imaging - Actually, It’s Dull New World, Not A Brave One

Regarding our shift away from hands-on diagnosis and into electronic mysticism, a camera has been created which can be placed in a pill. With optical system, imager, transmitter and battery, the capsule can go where man has never gone before. Given Imaging, Inc., an Israeli company, invented the system, including a work station and software, along with the disposable magic capsule, which allows visualization through all 22 feet of the small intestine. The FDA approved the procedure in August 2001, and it is now available in 268 medical facilities with a price tag of $1500. Expensive, yes, but cheaper than laparoscopy.

Is It Too Late To Try Barbarism?

In Kent, England, a woman sued a motorist over a motor vehicle crash in 1995. She claims that the accident caused her to suffer transient loss of memory. She forgot to take her birth control pills, became pregnant, and now she has brought a suit demanding that the other driver provide child support for her four year old son. The litigation insanity of the USA is being exported.

ADDENDA

The most frequent cosmetic surgery in the U.S. is liposuction; second place is collagen injection.

In about 250 B.C., Archimedes invented the screw.

If you unfolded your brain, it would cover the surface of an ironing board.

Add a warning that this is a satirical reprint of the well-known column, and a note that the writer is not commenting on the subjects of the column.