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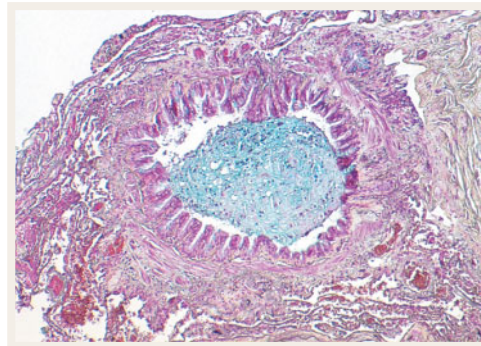


This Week in the Journal

JUNE 24, 2004

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

The Nature of Small-Airway Obstruction in COPD



Physiological observations indicate that the small airways are the predominant site of airway obstruction in patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). In this detailed pathological study of airway specimens obtained during resection from patients with COPD and various levels of airway obstruction, the mass

of airway wall tissue was closely linked to the degree of airflow impairment. This study enhances our understanding of the basic biology of COPD.

SEE P. 2645; PERSPECTIVE, P. 2635

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Long-Term Survival of Children with End-Stage Renal Disease

Data from a large Australia–New Zealand registry were analyzed to determine long-term survival among children and adolescents with end-stage renal disease who were younger than 20 years of age when renal-replacement therapy was initiated. Survival was 79 percent 10 years after the initiation of therapy and 66 percent at 20 years. There was a trend toward improved survival over the four decades of the study.

Increasing the rates of pediatric transplantation and improving the outcome are the two strategies most likely to improve survival further.

SEE P. 2654; PERSPECTIVE, P. 2637

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

α -Lactalbumin–Oleic Acid for Skin Papillomas

α -Lactalbumin–oleic acid, a protein–lipid complex derived from human milk, was serendipitously found to kill virus-transformed cells in tissue culture without affecting normal cells. In this in vivo study, the local application of α -lactalbumin–oleic acid induced the regression of skin papillomas, even those that were resistant to conventional treatments.

This investigation establishes the principle that the molecular complex of oleic acid and α -lactalbumin, which has apoptosis-like activity against transformed cells in culture, has in vivo activity against virus-transformed cells in the skin.

SEE P. 2663; PERSPECTIVE, P. 2639; CME, P. 2731

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Folate Therapy after Coronary Stenting

Some studies have shown that the use of folate supplementation to lower plasma homocysteine levels reduces the rate of restenosis in patients who have undergone angioplasty, but results have been inconsistent. In this study, patients who had received a coronary stent were randomly assigned to receive placebo or a combination of folate, vitamin B₆, and vitamin B₁₂. Those receiving active therapy had a higher rate of in-stent restenosis.

Folate therapy cannot be routinely recommended after coronary stenting.

SEE P. 2673; EDITORIAL, P. 2708

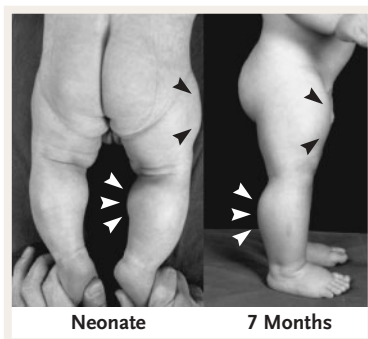
BRIEF REPORT

Myostatin Mutation Associated with Muscle Hypertrophy in a Child

Both acquired and inherited disorders of muscle are common; thus, greater understanding of muscle growth and maintenance is important for future therapies. Myostatin down-regulates muscle growth. These investigators describe a mutation in the gene for myostatin in a child with muscle hypertrophy and unusual strength.

The clinical phenotype of this child suggests that myostatin is important in regulating muscle mass in humans.

SEE P. 2682; PERSPECTIVE, P. 2642



CURRENT CONCEPTS

Management of Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease

The goals of therapy for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease include relieving symptoms, improving abnormal physiology, and limiting complications, including abnormal gas exchange and exacerbations of the disease. This review summarizes current guidelines and provides recommendations for management, including assessment of lung function, preventive measures, stepwise medical therapy, and pulmonary rehabilitation and surgical therapy. By the time this disease becomes symptomatic, the forced vital capacity of most patients has already declined by about 50 percent.

SEE P. 2689; CME, P. 2729

CASE RECORDS OF THE MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL HOSPITAL

A Woman with Pelvic-Floor Relaxation after Vaginal Delivery

A woman told her physician that she had pelvic pressure and a vaginal bulge shortly after her second vaginal delivery. Examination showed uterine prolapse, cystocele, and rectocele. Despite conservative management with a pessary and exercises, the prolapse worsened and urinary symptoms developed. Is there a link among pregnancy, vaginal delivery, uterine prolapse, and incontinence? How should this condition be managed?

SEE P. 2699; CME, P. 2730

CLINICAL IMPLICATIONS OF BASIC RESEARCH

Tweaking a Tumor Suppressor

The tumor-suppressor protein p53 is mutant in a large proportion of many cancers; a recent study bolsters hope that p53-targeted therapy can be devised.

SEE P. 2711