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Next Week in the Journal

NOVEMBER 18, 2004

COX-2 Inhibitors and Medicaid

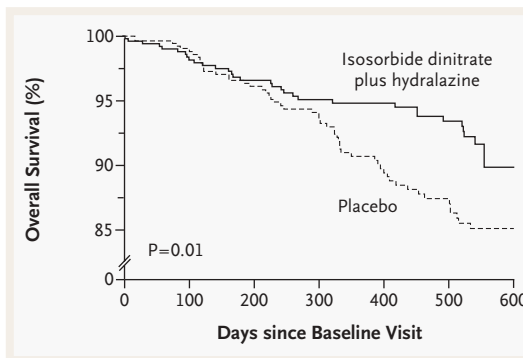


This Week in the Journal

NOVEMBER 11, 2004

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Isosorbide Dinitrate and Hydralazine in Blacks with Heart Failure



This clinical trial, in which the study group was made up of black patients with heart failure, showed that the combination of isosorbide dinitrate and hydralazine significantly improves survival when added to standard therapy for heart failure.

This study did not include white patients, because retrospective analyses of previous data suggested no benefit. The mechanism of the clinically important improvement in survival is uncertain but may be related to enhancement of nitric oxide by the drug combination.

SEE P. 2049; PERSPECTIVE, P. 2035; EDITORIAL, P. 2112; CME, P. 2141

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

ACE Inhibition in Coronary Artery Disease

Angiotensin-converting-enzyme (ACE) inhibitors improve outcomes in patients with left ventricular dysfunction or heart failure. The Prevention of Events with Angiotensin Converting Enzyme Inhibition (PEACE) Trial investigators studied the effect of the ACE inhibitor trandolapril in patients with stable coronary disease and normal or only slightly reduced left ventricular function, and no benefit was found.

This trial appears to define the limits of efficacy of ACE inhibition in patients with coronary artery disease who are already receiving maximal contemporary therapy.

SEE P. 2058; EDITORIAL, P. 2115; CME, P. 2142

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Anti-Interleukin-12 Antibody for Crohn's Disease

The cytokine interleukin-12 has been implicated in the intestinal inflammation of Crohn's disease. In this phase 2 trial, the rates of adverse events were similar among patients who received a monoclonal antibody against interleukin-12 and patients who received placebo, with the exception of local reactions at injection sites, which were more common in the former group. The rates of clinical response and remission were higher among patients treated with antibody but not significantly so in most cases.

This small study provides preliminary data suggesting that a monoclonal antibody targeted to interleukin-12 p40 may have biologic activity against Crohn's disease.

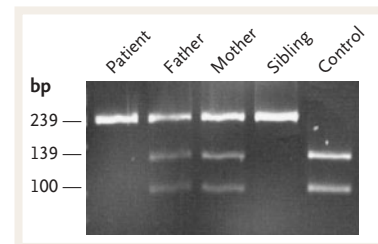
SEE P. 2069; PERSPECTIVE, P. 2045

BRIEF REPORT

Defects in Mitochondrial DNA and Early Fatal Hepatoencephalopathy

The causation of diseases involving the deficiency of more than one enzyme involved in the process of mitochondrial oxidative phosphorylation is unclear. This study suggests one potential cause. The authors identified mutation of a gene encoding a component of the mitochondrial translation machinery in two siblings with early fatal hepatoencephalopathy.

SEE P. 2080



MECHANISMS OF DISEASE

Intermediate Filament Proteins

Intermediate filaments provide scaffolding for the cell and protect it against stress. This comprehensive review points out that there are more than 100 intermediate filament genes and that mutant intermediate filament proteins cause more than 30 diseases. Selective expression of these genes in particular tissues accounts for tissue-specific diseases caused by mutant intermediate filament genes, such as epidermolysis bullosa simplex and certain types of cardiomyopathy.

SEE P. 2087



CASE RECORDS OF THE MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL HOSPITAL

A Man with Recurrent Pain in the Right Flank and Hematuria

A 45-year-old man had right flank pain associated with hematuria. Computed tomographic scanning without enhancement disclosed a nonobstructing stone in the right kidney. After a second episode 11 months later, the stone was still present, and there was new dilatation of the right renal pelvis. The physicians discuss how this patient was evaluated and treated.

SEE P. 2102; CME, P. 2143



LEGAL ISSUES IN MEDICINE

Extremely Preterm Birth and Parental Authority to Refuse Treatment

In 1990, a neonatologist resuscitated a severely premature infant against the wishes of the parents. The child survived with severe disabilities. The parents sued the hospital for battery and negligence. In 2003, the Texas Supreme Court ruled in favor of the physicians and hospitals. According to the ruling, physicians who are faced with split-second, life-or-death decisions do not need parental consent to provide life-sustaining treatment to minors.

SEE P. 2118

CLINICAL IMPLICATIONS OF BASIC RESEARCH

Cachexia Pathways

Two molecular pathways are implicated in cachexia: both target the myosin heavy chain.

SEE P. 2124