

**CORRESPONDENCE**

- 2875 Rofecoxib, Merck, and the FDA  
2879 Peginterferon and Lamivudine for Hepatitis B  
2879 Public Access to Biomedical Research  
2881 Undercover and Overlooked  
2881 Case 27-2004: Multiple-System Atrophy  
2883 Somatic Mutations of *EGFR* in Colorectal Cancers and Glioblastomas

**BOOK REVIEWS**

- 2884 The Renewal of Generosity: Illness, Medicine, and How to Live  
2885 Ethical Foundations of Palliative Care for Alzheimer Disease  
2886 Transplanting Human Tissue: Ethics, Policy, and Practice  
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**CONTINUING MEDICAL EDUCATION**

- 2889 Prevention of Hepatitis B with the Hepatitis B Vaccine  
2890 Coronary-Artery Revascularization before Elective Major Vascular Surgery  
2891 Osteopetrosis

**Next Week  
in the Journal**

JANUARY 6, 2005

**Doctors and Military  
Interrogation**

M. Gregg Bloche  
and Jonathan Marks

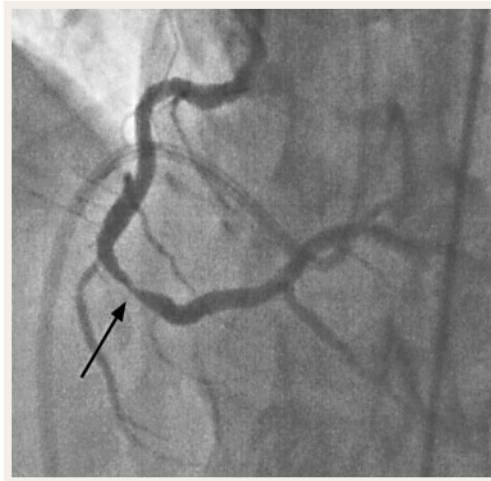


# This Week in the Journal

DECEMBER 30, 2004

**ORIGINAL ARTICLE**

**Coronary Revascularization before Vascular Surgery**



Coronary artery disease and peripheral vascular disease often coexist. Patients with unstable coronary disease benefit from coronary revascularization before vascular surgery, but in patients with stable coronary disease the situation is not so clear. In this randomized trial, there was no benefit from preoperative coronary revascularization among patients with stable coronary disease who underwent elective surgery for

abdominal aortic aneurysm or vascular disease of the legs. Therefore, prophylactic revascularization should be reserved for patients at higher risk.

SEE P. 2795; EDITORIAL, P. 2861; CME, P. 2890

## ORIGINAL ARTICLE

**Anti-VEGF Therapy and Age-Related Macular Degeneration**

Age-related macular degeneration is a common cause of blindness. In this study, intraocular injection of an agent (pegaptanib) that blocks the receptor for vascular endothelial growth factor (VEGF) retarded the rate of vision loss caused by age-related macular degeneration. Endophthalmitis occurred in a few of the patients who received injections. Although the long-term safety and efficacy of pegaptanib therapy are unknown, these results suggest that long-term studies of pegaptanib in the treatment of age-related macular degeneration are needed.

SEE P. 2805; EDITORIAL, P. 2863

## ORIGINAL ARTICLE

**Multigene Assay to Predict Recurrence of Tamoxifen-Treated, Node-Negative Breast Cancer**

A polymerase-chain-reaction assay of 21 genes performed on paraffin-embedded samples from women with node-negative, estrogen-receptor-positive breast cancer was the basis for calculating a score for the risk of distant recurrence. The difference in risk between women with low and high recurrence scores was significant. The recurrence score also predicted overall survival.

The recurrence score can estimate the risk of distant recurrence in individual patients with breast cancer.

SEE P. 2817; EDITORIAL, P. 2865

## BRIEF REPORT

**Codeine Intoxication Associated with Ultrarapid CYP2D6 Metabolism**

The authors describe a patient with life-threatening opioid intoxication despite having received only moderate doses of codeine. Blood levels of morphine and morphine-6-glucuronide were elevated. CYP2D6 genotyping showed three or more functional alleles, a finding consistent with ultrarapid metabolism. Toxicity was attributed to this genotype, in combination with inhibition of CYP3A4 activity by other medications and a transient reduction in renal function.

SEE P. 2827; EDITORIAL, P. 2867

## CLINICAL PRACTICE

**Prevention of Hepatitis B with the Hepatitis B Vaccine**

A 25-year-old registered nurse comes for a visit to initiate prenatal care after receiving a positive result on a pregnancy test. On review of her vaccination status, she reports that she declined hepatitis B vaccination when it was offered by her current employer because she does not draw blood and thus does not consider herself at risk. Should she receive the vaccine? What are the current recommendations for hepatitis B vaccination?

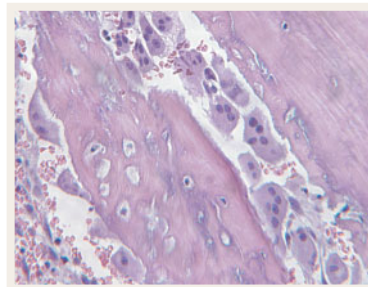
SEE P. 2832; CME, P. 2889

## MECHANISMS OF DISEASE

**Osteopetrosis**

This review of the mechanism of osteopetrosis incriminates molecular defects in osteoclasts as the cause of the imbalance between bone formation by osteoblasts and bone resorption by osteoclasts. Numerous kinds of defects of osteoclast function can cause osteopetrosis in experimental animals, but only one class of defect — the inability to acidify — has been identified in osteopetrosis in humans.

SEE P. 2839; CME, P. 2891



## SOUNDING BOARD

**Potential Pitfalls of Disease-Specific Guidelines for Patients with Multiple Conditions**

Quality-measurement and payment-for-performance programs encourage physicians to deliver care that is consistent with practice guidelines. In the treatment of patients with multiple medical problems, adherence to disease-specific guidelines often requires the use of 10 or more medications, yet the marginal benefits and adverse effects of the 8th, 9th, or 10th medication in such patients are not known. The authors emphasize the importance of considering patients' quality of life, preferences, and values when prescribing medications for those with multiple chronic illnesses.

SEE P. 2870

## CASE RECORDS OF THE MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL HOSPITAL

**A Woman with Long-Standing Hematuria**

A 42-year-old woman was referred to a specialty clinic for evaluation of microscopic hematuria of 14 years' duration. It had been first detected during an episode of cystitis, but persisted thereafter with 1+ proteinuria. She had borderline hypertension. Two sisters also had hematuria and her brother had died of renal failure. Urinalysis showed dysmorphic red cells. A diagnostic procedure was performed.

SEE P. 2851