

# THIS WEEK in the JOURNAL

## ORIGINAL ARTICLE

### Protective Conditioning for Acute Graft-versus-Host Disease

Treatment of hematologic malignant disease with allogeneic hematopoietic stem cells requires conditioning regimens that carry a substantial risk of acute graft-versus-host disease (GVHD). This study found that a regimen developed in a mouse model sharply reduces the incidence of acute GVHD yet retains potent antitumor activity.

SEE P. 1321; EDITORIAL, P. 1396

## ORIGINAL ARTICLE

### Drotrecogin Alfa for Patients with Sepsis and a Low Risk of Death

Drotrecogin alfa (activated) is approved for use in patients with sepsis who are at high risk for death. This controlled trial found no benefit in patients at a low risk for death (relative risk of death with drotrecogin alfa, 1.08). The rate of serious bleeding was higher with drotrecogin alfa. Drotrecogin alfa should not be used in patients with sepsis who have a low risk of death, such as those with single-organ failure or an APACHE II score below 25.

SEE P. 1332; EDITORIAL, P. 1398; CME, P. 1431

## ORIGINAL ARTICLE

### Long-Term Vasodilator Therapy in Patients with Severe Aortic Regurgitation

In a study published over a decade ago, patients with severe aortic regurgitation who were treated with nifedipine as compared with digoxin had a delay in the need for aortic-valve replacement. A trial in this issue comparing nifedipine or enalapril with no treatment was not able to confirm such an effect.

SEE P. 1342; EDITORIAL, P. 1400

## ORIGINAL ARTICLE

### Hyperimmune Globulin for Infection during Pregnancy

Congenital cytomegalovirus (CMV) infection is associated with a high rate of neurologic sequelae. In this study, intravenous CMV-specific hyperimmune globulin was given to 31 pregnant women who had evidence of recent primary CMV infection. Only one had an infant with symptomatic impairment, as compared with impairment in 7 of 14 infants born to women who did not receive hyperimmune globulin. Hyperimmune globulin was safe, and this nonrandomized study sug-

gests that it may be effective in treating and preventing congenital CMV infections.

SEE P. 1350; EDITORIAL, P. 1402

## DRUG THERAPY

### Neuraminidase Inhibitors for Influenza

This article considers neuraminidase inhibitors, which are active against influenza virus and are crucial to planning for an influenza pandemic from a new influenza virus of any origin, including avian influenza.

SEE P. 1363

## CURRENT CONCEPTS

### Avian Influenza in Humans

A highly pathogenic avian influenza A (H5N1) virus has crossed the species barrier to cause deaths in humans in Asia and poses an increasing threat of a pandemic. These infections differ from human influenza in the routes of transmission, clinical severity, pathogenesis, and response to treatment. This article describes the features of influenza A (H5N1) infection and updates recommendations for prevention and clinical management.

SEE P. 1374; CME, P. 1429

## CASE RECORDS OF THE MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL HOSPITAL

### A Man with Fever and Axillary Lymphadenopathy

A 56-year-old renal-transplant recipient presented with fever and axillary lymphadenopathy. There was no recent travel or exposure to ill persons. Examination disclosed a skin nodule on the dorsum of his hand and a tender mass of lymph nodes in the ipsilateral axilla. Clarithromycin was prescribed; within a day, the temperature rose to 39.4°C, with shaking chills.

SEE P. 1387; CME, P. 1430

## SOUNDING BOARD

### Accidental Deaths, Saved Lives, and Improved Quality

The authors argue that despite the success of the patient-safety movement in attracting the attention of the public and the medical profession, the Institute of Medicine's goal of reducing deaths from medical errors by 50 percent has not been achieved. They believe the greatest promise will come not from a focus on preventing accidental deaths but from dedication to evidence-based interventions to deliver more effective medical care.

SEE P. 1405

## CLINICAL IMPLICATIONS OF BASIC RESEARCH

### On Target with Silencing RNAs

A new way to target cell-specific gene expression has been demonstrated in two mouse models of cancer.

SEE P. 1410