

THIS WEEK in the JOURNAL

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Mycophenolate Mofetil or Cyclophosphamide for Lupus Nephritis

This 24-week randomized, open-label, noninferiority trial compared oral mycophenolate mofetil with monthly intravenous cyclophosphamide as induction therapy for active lupus nephritis. Mycophenolate mofetil appeared more effective than intravenous cyclophosphamide in inducing remission of lupus nephritis, with a more favorable safety profile.

SEE P. 2219; EDITORIAL, P. 2282; CME, P. 2315

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

High-Dose Acetylcysteine in Idiopathic Pulmonary Fibrosis

Idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis is a progressive disorder characterized by loss of lung function; there is no effective treatment. In this multinational, randomized, placebo-controlled trial with all patients receiving azathioprine and prednisone, acetylcysteine was shown to slow the rate of deterioration of lung function. There was no effect on survival.

SEE P. 2229; EDITORIAL, P. 2285

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Chromosome 1p and 11q Deletions and Outcome in Neuroblastoma

More than 900 samples of neuroblastoma were screened for loss of chromosomal material at two loci, 1p36 and 11q23. These abnormalities were associated with high-risk features of neuroblastoma or a poor clinical outcome.

SEE P. 2243; PERSPECTIVE, P. 2215

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Beta-Blockers to Prevent Gastroesophageal Varices in Patients with Cirrhosis

Beta-blockers prevent variceal bleeding in patients with cirrhosis who already have esophageal varices. In this randomized, placebo-controlled trial, timolol (a non-selective beta-blocker) did not prevent esophageal

varices in patients with cirrhosis who had portal hypertension.

SEE P. 2254; EDITORIAL, P. 2288; CME, P. 2314

CURRENT CONCEPTS

Basal-Cell Carcinoma

Basal-cell carcinoma is the most common malignant tumor, and its incidence is increasing. This review explains the treatment options, including four surgical approaches, topical therapy, photodynamic therapy, and radiation. Recent research on the pathogenesis is also summarized.

SEE P. 2262; CME, P. 2313

CASE RECORDS OF THE MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL HOSPITAL

A Woman with Seizure, Disturbed Gait, and Altered Mental Status

A 62-year-old, previously healthy woman had a seizure, which was followed by persistent aphasia. Imaging studies showed bright lesions on T₂-weighted and diffusion-weighted imaging, involving the cortex and the white matter, with normal perfusion. A brain biopsy showed changes consistent with ischemia. Over the course of the next year, hearing loss and slowly progressive dementia developed. A diagnostic procedure was performed.

SEE P. 2271

LEGAL ISSUES IN MEDICINE

California's Medical-Marijuana Law

The U.S. Supreme Court recently ruled that Congress has the authority under the commerce clause to prohibit the medicinal use of homegrown marijuana, even in states, such as California, that have passed statutes permitting such use. In this article, George Annas explains the Court's rationale for its ruling and discusses the implications of the case.

SEE P. 2291

CLINICAL IMPLICATIONS OF BASIC RESEARCH

Inducing Intestinal Growth

A newly discovered protein induces intestinal growth; manipulating this system could have therapeutic implications for intestinal disorders.

SEE P. 2297