

THIS WEEK in the JOURNAL

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Aspirin and Colorectal Cancer in Relation to the Expression of COX-2

This study of 636 cases of colorectal cancer culled from two large cohorts of participants who reported data on aspirin use showed that regular use of aspirin reduced the risk of having a colorectal cancer that expressed high amounts of COX-2, an enzyme affected by aspirin.

SEE P. 2131; EDITORIAL, P. 2195; CME, P. 2230

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Burch Colposuspension versus Fascial Sling to Reduce Urinary Stress Incontinence

This multicenter, randomized clinical trial compared two surgical procedures — the Burch colposuspension and the autologous fascial pubovaginal sling — in women with urinary stress incontinence. Success rates (in terms of overall urinary-incontinence measures and stress-incontinence measures specifically) were higher at 2 years for the sling group, but this group also had greater morbidity. These findings inform decision making with respect to surgical treatment of stress incontinence and underscore the importance of surgical randomized trials.

SEE P. 2143; EDITORIAL, P. 2198

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Advanced Life Support for Out-of-Hospital Respiratory Distress

Patients with out-of-hospital respiratory distress who received treatment from emergency medical services personnel with advanced-life-support training had a lower in-hospital mortality than those who received treatment from providers without this training. The difference may be in part attributable to advanced-life-support interventions. Whether the data are sufficient to justify broad implementation of such training is unclear.

SEE P. 2156; CME, P. 2231

SPECIAL ARTICLE

NICU Volume and Mortality among Very-Low-Birth-Weight Infants

As compared with mortality in hospitals with high-level, high-volume neonatal intensive care units (NICUs), the mortality among very-low-birth-weight infants was higher at NICUs with lower levels of care and lower

patient volumes. Although these data cannot prove cause and effect, the results suggest that increased regional consolidation of perinatal care is feasible and might reduce mortality among very-low-birth-weight infants.

SEE P. 2165

CLINICAL THERAPEUTICS

Bariatric Surgery for Morbid Obesity

A 44-year-old morbidly obese woman inquires about bariatric surgery, a treatment option for patients with a body-mass index of 40 or more (or of 35 or more when there are coexisting medical conditions). Bariatric surgery has been shown to result in substantial weight loss and resolution of associated conditions. A successful clinical outcome requires an experienced multidisciplinary management team and an informed patient who will follow a plan of long-term management and self-care.

SEE P. 2176; CME, P. 2229

CASE RECORDS OF THE MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL HOSPITAL

A Man with a Mediastinal Mass

A 61-year-old man was referred to the thoracic oncology service for management of a thymoma. Six weeks earlier, a mediastinal mass, 4 cm in diameter, had been detected on a computed tomographic scan obtained because of chest pain. A positron-emission tomographic scan showed increased tracer uptake in the area of the lesion. Biopsy specimens showed a World Health Organization type B1 thymoma. Physical examination was normal. A decision on management was made.

SEE P. 2185

HEALTH LAW, ETHICS, AND HUMAN RIGHTS

The Supreme Court and Abortion Rights

In *Gonzales v. Carhart*, the Supreme Court ruled 5 to 4 that a physician can be prohibited from performing a particular medical procedure to abort a fetus, even if the physician believes the procedure is necessary to protect a woman's health. The author discusses the important implications of this decision for patients and physicians.

SEE P. 2201; PERSPECTIVES, P. 2125 AND P. 2128; EDITORIAL, P. 2195

CLINICAL IMPLICATIONS OF BASIC RESEARCH

Tanning and p53

Exposure of skin to ultraviolet light results in the synthesis of pro-opiomelanocortin (the precursor of melanin). A recent study implicates p53 in this process.

SEE P. 2208