

THIS WEEK in the JOURNAL

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Early Thimerosal Exposure and Neuropsychological Outcomes at 7 to 10 Years

This study examined the association between early exposure to thimerosal, a mercury-containing preservative used in vaccines, and neuropsychological outcomes in children. Among the 42 neuropsychological outcomes assessed, only a few significant associations were identified, and the associations were small and both positive and negative. These findings suggest that exposure to thimerosal-containing vaccines does not reduce neuropsychological functioning in children.

SEE P. 1281; PERSPECTIVES, P. 1275 AND P. 1278; CME, P. 1363

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Antibodies against MICA Antigens and Kidney-Transplant Rejection

Some kidney transplants fail despite good HLA matching, so other antigens might be involved. Major-histocompatibility-complex class I–related chain A (MICA) antigens are polymorphic and can elicit antibody production. This study shows that presensitization of kidney-transplant recipients against MICA antigens is associated with an increased frequency of graft loss. Immune response against MICA antigens might contribute to this loss among recipients well matched for HLA.

SEE P. 1293; EDITORIAL, P. 1337

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Cardiovascular Events and Very Low Levels of LDL Cholesterol

In a post hoc analysis of the Treating to New Targets study, high-density lipoprotein cholesterol levels in patients receiving statin therapy were shown to be predictive of subsequent major cardiovascular events, even when low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol levels were taken into account and even among patients with very low levels of LDL cholesterol (<70 mg per deciliter).

SEE P. 1301; CME, P. 1362

BRIEF REPORT

Evidence of MEN-2 in the Original Description of Classic Pheochromocytoma

This article provides a molecular update of the first published description of pheochromocytoma, attrib-

uted to Felix Fränkel, who described an 18-year-old woman with bilateral adrenal “sarcoma and angio-sarcoma.” The authors approached and assessed relatives, ultimately demonstrating the presence of germ-line *RET* mutations in four living relatives, thus indicating that this patient and members of her family had multiple endocrine neoplasia type 2.

SEE P. 1311

MEDICAL PROGRESS

Uremia

The meaning of uremia, which refers to the illness accompanying kidney failure that is unexplained by derangements in extracellular volume, inorganic ion concentrations, or lack of known renal synthetic products, has changed. We now assume that uremic illness is due largely to the accumulation of organic waste products, not all identified, that are normally cleared by the kidneys. This review considers the pathogenesis and course of uremia.

SEE P. 1316; CME, P. 1361

CASE RECORDS OF THE MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL HOSPITAL

A Newborn Girl with Skin Lesions

A full-term newborn girl was transferred to this hospital because of multiple cutaneous erosions and papules on the face, trunk, arms, and legs that were present at birth. She was otherwise well, with normal vital signs. A diagnostic procedure was performed.

SEE P. 1327

SOUNDING BOARD

Harnessing the Power of Default Options to Improve Health Care

Decision makers sometimes face a default choice — the option that will be implemented if an alternative is not actively chosen. Health care quality can be improved by default options such as administering vaccinations to eligible hospitalized patients who do not decline them. The authors argue that these options should be set strategically and used to improve public health.

SEE P. 1340

CLINICAL IMPLICATIONS OF BASIC RESEARCH

Viral Latency and the Immune Response

Mice with latent herpesvirus infections are surprisingly resistant to infection by pathogenic bacteria.

SEE P. 1345