

WEEKLY JABS

Issue 3

13-19 January 2011

Weekly Jabs is compiled by Library staff at the Royal Society of Medicine (RSM) and is e-mailed every Thursday to subscribers. It highlights a selection of topical health and medical news stories from the last 7 days published in the British popular media – the sources that your patients are reading daily! Web links are provided directly to the news story and to the original research, where possible. Please note that these stories are represented here for the purpose of news reporting only and no critical evaluation of their content has been carried out by Library staff.

What are your patients reading?

Pick of the crop: “Behind the Headlines” from NHS Choices

Behind the Headlines provides an unbiased and evidence-based analysis of top health stories that make the news. Web links are provided for both the news story and original research at the bottom of each review.

- [Combined drugs ‘better’ for blood pressure](#) (13 January 2011)
- [Gene test ‘predicts 448 child diseases’](#) (13 January 2011)
- [Call for breastfeeding advice to be re-examined](#) (14 January 2011)
- [Tai Chi ‘prevents falls in the elderly’](#) (14 January 2011)
- [Big breakfasts ‘bad for diets’](#) (17 January 2011)
- [Different mix of fats in organic milk](#) (17 January 2011)
- [Menopause symptoms and breast cancer risk](#) (18 January 2011)
- [Antibiotic link to bowel problems unclear](#) (18 January 2011)
- [Statin benefit for low risk people ‘questionable’](#) (19 January 2011)
- [Newspapers catch ‘man flu’ fever](#) (19 January 2011)

And what about the rest?

1 – [How high-pitched music could cure tinnitus by ‘re-booting’ the brain](#) (Daily Mail, 13 January 2011)

Writing in the journal [Nature](#), American scientists have successfully eliminated tinnitus in rats by electrically stimulating the vagus nerve at the same time as playing sounds tuned to various frequencies, effectively “retuning” the brain. This story was also reported in the [Daily Express](#), [The Guardian](#) and [The Independent](#).

2 – [Scientists bring cancer cells back under control](#) (The Telegraph, 13 January 2011)

Researchers at [Nottingham University](#) have successfully tested a new technique on animals that makes malignant cancer cells benign and stops them from metastasizing.

3 – [How your sense of smell could predict when you’re going to die](#) (Daily Mail, 13 January 2011)

In a study of 1,162 older persons without dementia or Parkinson's disease, [American scientists](#) found a 36% increased risk of death in those who had difficulty in identifying familiar smells in old age.

4 – [Melatonin production falls if the lights are on](#) (BBC News, 14 January 2011)

A [retrospective analysis](#) of 116 healthy adults revealed that the longer individuals were exposed to artificial light in the 8 hours before sleep, the less time the hormone melatonin remained in the body, increasing the risk of diabetes, hypertension and cancer.

5 – [Blood group O 'protects against heart attacks'](#) (The Telegraph, 15 January 2011)

Writing in the [Lancet](#), two genome-wide association studies of sufferers with coronary artery disease discovered that those with the gene for blood group O also offered them some protection against myocardial infarction.

6 – [How blueberries cut the risk of high blood pressure](#) (Daily Express, 15 January 2011)

A [team of British and American scientists](#) who studied 133,914 women and 23,043 men over a period of 14 years found that those who ate at least one serving per week of blueberries were 10% less likely to suffer from hypertension.

7 – [Smoking 'causes damage in minutes', US experts claim](#) (BBC News, 16 January 2011)

In a [small-scale study](#) of 12 smokers, American scientists have discovered that high levels of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons found in cigarettes were present within 15-30 mins of smoking, indicating DNA damage being likely in minutes rather than years. This story was also reported in the [Daily Mail](#).

8 – [Pill to cure the PMT blues revealed](#) (The Scotsman, 17 January 2011)

A [randomised double-blind placebo-controlled trial](#) of 120 women with premenstrual syndrome found those who took a 2g capsule containing essential oils reported significant improvements in their symptoms at their 3 and 6-month follow-ups. This story was also reported in the [Daily Express](#), [Daily Mail](#) and [The Independent](#).

9 – [Arthritis 'trigger' found](#) (Daily Express, 17 January 2011)

Scientists at [Imperial College London](#) have discovered a protein IRF5 that acts as a "switch" prompting macrophages to promote inflammation which in turn triggers rheumatoid arthritis.

10 – [Heart patients 'more likely to die on general wards'](#) (The Guardian, 18 January 2011)

People with heart failure are 2.5 times more likely to die if they are admitted to a general hospital ward rather than a cardiology ward, according to the [national heart failure audit for England Wales](#) which enrolled 6,170 elderly patients from 86 hospitals. This story was also reported in the [Daily Mail](#) and [The Telegraph](#).

11 – [Early Alzheimer's sufferers to get new drugs after u-turn](#) (The Telegraph, 18 January 2011)

[NICE](#) has issued a final appraisal determination indicating that donepezil (Aricept), galantamine (Reminyl) and rivastigmine (Exelon) will be made available on the NHS to patients with mild Alzheimer's disease and not just to those in moderate stages of the disease. This story was also reported in the [Daily Express](#) and [Daily Mail](#),

12 – [How those Friday night glasses of wine could be quietly killing you](#) (Daily Mail, 18 January 2011)

Writing in the [BMJ](#), cohort data from the Prospective Epidemiological Study of Myocardial Infarction (PRIME) involving 9,778 men from one centre in Belfast, Northern Ireland and 3 centres in France found that the Ulster men, who drank fewer units per week than the French, were twice as likely either to have a heart attack or die from one, due to binge-drinking which lost the protective effects of alcohol on their heart.

13 – [Antioxidants may help men with fertility problems, study reveals](#) (The Guardian, 19 January 2011)

A [Cochrane review](#) of 34 clinical trials involving 2,876 couples struggling to conceive concluded that the mean number of pregnancies rose from 3.1 to 11.8 per 100 couples when the man took antioxidant supplements. This story was also reported in [The Independent](#) and by [BBC News](#).

14 – [Eight portions of fruit and vegetables a day protects against heart disease](#) (The Telegraph, 19 January 2011)

An [observational study](#) which followed up 313,074 men and women from 8 European countries over 8.4 years found that eating at least 8 portions of fruit and vegetables a day was associated with a 22% lower risk of dying from ischaemic heart disease, compared with eating less than 3 portions. This story was also reported in the [Daily Express](#) and [Daily Mail](#).

Annual Evidence Updates

Annual Evidence Updates are produced by the NHS Evidence Specialist Collections. They highlight the best evidence published in the last 12 months in the diagnosis, treatment and management of specific conditions.

- [Patient and carer involvement in chronic disease](#) (17-21 January 2011)

Too many journals? Not enough time? You need an EMU

By setting up an **Electronic Monthly Update (EMU)** with us, up-to-date key medical journal references are e-mailed direct to your desktop. An electronic search profile is tailor-made to your individual information needs on the database(s) of your choice ensuring that you receive only relevant literature. To find out more information about this service, please visit [our web site](#).

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