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ARTICLES

Low-Dose Prednisone Therapy for Patients with Early Active Rheumatoid Arthritis: Clinical Efficacy, Disease-Modifying Properties, and Side Effects. A Randomized, Double-Blind, Placebo-Controlled Clinical Trial 1

A.A. van Everdingen, J.W.G. Jacobs,

D.R. Siewertsz van Reesema, and J.W.J. Bijlsma

Prednisone, 10 mg/d, provides clinical benefit, particularly in the first 6 months, and substantially inhibits progression of radiologic joint damage in patients with early active rheumatoid arthritis and no previous treatment with disease-modifying antirheumatic drugs. Because of their limited disease-modifying effects, glucocorticoids should be combined with disease-modifying antirheumatic drugs in patients with rheumatoid arthritis.

Risk Factors for *Helicobacter pylori* Resistance in the United States: The Surveillance of *H. pylori* Antimicrobial Resistance Partnership (SHARP) Study, 1993–1999 13

J.M. Meyer, N.P. Silliman, W. Wang, N.Y. Siepmann, J.E. Sugg, D. Morris, J. Zhang, H. Bhattacharyya, E.C. King, and R.J. Hopkins

Clinicians should consider risk factors for antimicrobial resistance when deciding which patients should have susceptibility testing and when choosing appropriate *Helicobacter pylori* treatments in the empirical setting.

Recovery Rate and Prognosis in Older Persons Who Develop Acute Lung Injury and the Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome 25

E.W. Ely, A.P. Wheeler, B.T. Thompson, M. Ancukiewicz, K.P. Steinberg, and G.R. Bernard, for the Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome Network

Although the survival rate among mechanically ventilated patients 70 years of age or older in this study was high, these patients were twice as likely to die of acute lung injury compared with their younger counterparts, even after adjustment for covariates. Older survivors recovered from respiratory failure and achieved spontaneous breathing at the same rate as younger patients but had greater difficulty being liberated from the ventilator and being discharged from the intensive care unit.

BRIEF COMMUNICATION

Anomalies of the Inferior Vena Cava in Patients with Iliac Venous Thrombosis 37

A. Obernosterer, M. Aschauer, W. Schnedl, and R.W. Lipp

An anomaly of the inferior vena cava should be suspected if thrombosis involving the iliac veins occurs in patients 30 years of age or younger. Patients with an anomaly and thrombosis may be at higher risk for thrombotic recurrence.

ACADEMIA AND CLINIC

The Risk–Benefit Profile of Commonly Used Herbal Therapies: Ginkgo, St. John’s Wort, Ginseng, Echinacea, Saw Palmetto, and Kava 42

E. Ernst

The author outlines risk–benefit profiles for the most commonly used herbal medicines. These profiles are based on systematic reviews where possible.

REVIEW

Therapeutic Angiogenesis for Coronary Artery Disease 54
S.B. Freedman and J.M. Isner

This review discusses the biology of angiogenesis that forms the basis for clinical studies of patients with coronary artery disease, and it summarizes information from clinical trials of therapeutic angiogenesis for myocardial ischemia.

PERSPECTIVE

Caring for Patients at the End of Life: Reflections after 12 Years of Practice 72

R.A. Parker

The author describes interactions with families of dying patients, discusses logistic issues around dying, examines do-not-resuscitate orders, and highlights experiences with home visits.

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EDITORIAL

Are Long-Term Very Low Doses of Prednisone for Patients with Rheumatoid Arthritis as Helpful as High Doses Are Harmful?

T. Pincus, T. Sokka, and C.M. Stein

The elegantly designed and well-executed study by van Everdingen and colleagues in this issue presents a unique opportunity to evaluate benefits and risks of corticosteroid therapy for rheumatoid arthritis independent of other therapies; this clinical setting is unlikely to recur. It is commendable that these authors chose to reanalyze a therapy that has been available for more than 50 years.

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POSITION PAPER

Pharmacist Scope of Practice

American College of Physicians–American Society of Internal Medicine

79

This paper explores the increased scope of practice of U.S. pharmacists, presents background information on the pharmacy profession, and outlines how the medical profession can work with pharmacists to enhance patient safety and quality of care.

LETTERS

Osteoarthritis: New Insights

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T.E. Lindow; D.D. Waddell; P.J. Rosch; R.H. Palmer; D.T. Felson and T. McAlindon

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