



The popularity of monoamine oxidase type B inhibitors (MAOIBs) in early Parkinson's disease decreased after their use was found to be associated with increased mortality. But a recent meta-analysis of 17 randomised trials including 3525 patients showed no significant difference in mortality between patients taking MAOIBs and control patients. An accompanying editorial says these drugs clearly provide symptomatic benefit and probably entail no risk of increased mortality if they are used as monotherapy and in younger and otherwise healthy patients. As for their use in polytherapy and older people, the debate over mortality continues.

*British Medical Journal*, 2004, **329**, 581–582.

MMR (mumps, measles and rubella) vaccination induces fever and predictably results in an increase in the rate of febrile seizures. A large and robust population based cohort study of over half a million children reported in *JAMA* confirms this. This increased rate of seizures was restricted to two weeks after vaccination. Interestingly, the increase in rate was small, even in children at high risk of febrile seizures. Nor was the long term rate of epilepsy higher in children who had febrile seizures after vaccination than in those who had febrile seizures due to other causes.

*Journal of the American Medical Association*, 2004, **292**, 351–7.

Dronabinol produced a modest reduction in central pain in a randomised placebo controlled crossover trial including 24 patients aged between 23 and 55 years who had multiple sclerosis. Adverse events, including dizziness, were more common with dronabinol than with placebo during the first week of treatment. What makes this trial different from others is that all patients clearly had central pain caused by central lesions. Previous trials have included patients with unspecified pain.

*British Medical Journal*, 2004, **329**, 253.

A retrospective study done in Australia identified the risk factors for recurrence of ischaemic stroke in patients admitted to hos-

## CARPHOLOGY BY RAJENDRA

pital for a first ever ischaemic stroke. The risk factors included the usual suspects, such as age, diabetes, and a history of cardiac conditions, but the researchers identified two unusual suspects—being an aboriginal, and transfer to another hospital on admission for the first stroke.

*Medical Journal of Australia* 2004, **181**, 244–6.

Eradication of leprosy is a long time away although it is on the decline—thanks to the gradual shortening of delays in detection of cases and the low relapse rate that occurs with multidrug treatment. But complacency with leprosy control strategies could be dangerous, according to a multiple scenario analysis. The annual predicted decline in the future incidence of leprosy ranges from 2–12% for various scenarios (such as those with and without BCG vaccination), and even the most optimistic prediction shows that up to 5 million cases could be detected in 2020.

*Bulletin of the World Health Organisation*, 2004, **82**, 373–80.

Twins from assisted conception have a similar risk of neurological sequelae as their naturally conceived peers and singletons from assisted conception. This was the finding from a controlled, national register based, cohort study including 3393 twins and 5130 singletons conceived by using assisted reproductive technologies and 239 naturally conceived twins born in Denmark between 1995 and 2000.

*British Medical Journal*, 2004, **329**, 311.

Another systematic review of 11 publications shows that exposure to non steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs is associated with a decreased risk of Alzheimer's disease. The combined relative risk estimate was 0.74 (95% confidence interval 0.62–0.89) from the four prospective studies and 0.51 (0.40–0.66) from the seven studies which were not prospective. This could spell optimism, but trials to treat Alzheimer's disease with NSAIDs have so far been disappointing.

*Neuroepidemiology*, 2004, **23**, 153–169.

All carphologists who don't read the *Journal of Vertebral Subluxation Research (JVSR)* over breakfast every morning will have missed this morsel. Forty four patients with multiple sclerosis and 37 with Parkinson's disease were found to have trauma induced upper cervical subluxations on paraspinal digital infrared imaging and laser aligned radiography. Of these, 40 (91%) patients with multiple sclerosis and 34 (92%) with Parkinson's disease showed symptomatic improvement and no further disease progression after being given treatment to correct their upper cervical injuries. This research was done in the author's private practice in an "uncontrolled, non-randomised environment." JVSR is a "peer-reviewed scientific journal"—which means peer review is as good as your peers, no better.

<http://www.jvsr.com/abstracts/index.asp?id=205>