Carphology by A Fo Ben

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WHEN THE CAT'S AWAY…

…the mice will play, or so the proverb goes. But what if the cat is a big part of the problem? A Fo Ben read with interest the NEJM study of the National Rifle Association's (NRA) assertion that ballistic injuries are primarily from inexperienced users. However, there was a *reduction* in firearm injuries during the convention dates compared with the weeks before and after an NRA convention. The drop was greatest in the groups most likely to be in attendance (men, those from the South and West, in states with the highest gun-ownership rates, and in the state hosting the convention). The same week a paper reported that patients admitted with acute myocardial infarction during Transcatheter Cardiovascular Therapeutics meeting dates have lower 30-day mortality. This was predominantly among patients with non-ST-segment-elevation myocardial infarction who were medically managed. This is an excellent time to remind readers that the ABN annual meeting is in Birmingham in May and that all-cause mortality may benefit from your attendance.

N Engl J Med. 2018;378(9):866-867.
J Am Heart Assoc. 2018;7(6).

LANDAU: HOPE AND GLORY

It says much of the obituary of Bill Landau who died last year, that nowhere is the eponymous Landau–Kleffner syndrome mentioned. It can be argued that he is the godfather of 'neuromythology' - the occasional Practical Neurology article that has slain the sacred cows of the Babinski reflex, Romberg sign and the cult of cotton wool. His article titles – '*The Marcus Gunn phenomenon: Loose cannon of neuro-ophthalmology*' and '*Au clair de lacune: Holy, wholly, holey logic*' convey the critical humour and keen eye of Landau. His assertion that he always preferred to be the Head of Neurology and not the Chair, (since he said the job required brains, not a butt), does carry a certain logic.

Neurology. 2018;90(5).

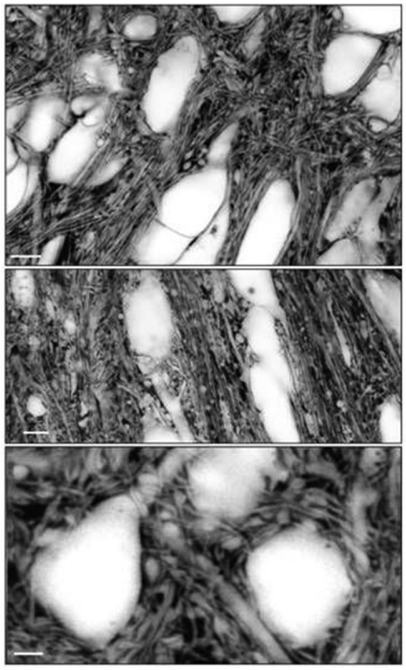

Figure 1 Simultaneous high-resolution imaging of all brain cells in living tissue Researchers combined 3D-STED microscopy and fluorescent labelling of the extracellular fluid to develop super-resolution shadow imaging (SUSHI) of brain extracellular space in living organotypic brain slices. The technique enables quantitative analysis of extracellular space structure and reveals dynamics on multiple scales in response to a variety of physiological stimuli. SUSHI image of cell bodies and neuropil in CA1 area (above), scale bar in top, 4 µm; middle, 5 µm; bottom, 2 µm. *Cell*. 2018;172(5):1108-1121.e15.

TO ESPOUSE EYEBROWS

A 3D-engineering study of the iconic brow-ridges of early man allowed researchers to test the theory as to why we have evolved to have such highly expressive eyebrows. After discounting pedestrian anatomical theories, they settled on an anthropological explanation: mobile eyebrows gave us the communication skills to establish large, social networks. A primordial Facebook if you like. They specifically permitted us to express more nuanced emotions such as recognition and sympathy, allowing for greater understanding and cooperation between people. Another subtle communicative loss for people with hypokinetic movement disorders, facial palsies, or acute alopecia of an eyebrow caused by injudicious napping on a stag do.

Nat Ecol Evol. 2018 doi: 10.1038/s41559-018-0528-0.

FROM NEURO-GENESIS TO REVELATION

Finally, better news for those of us who are ageing gracefully. Who am I kidding? I am ageing like an American President. An autopsy study of hippocampi from healthy human individuals ranging from 14 to 79 years of age looked at markers of neurogenesis over time. They found similar numbers of intermediate neural progenitors and thousands of immature neurones in the dentate gyrus, comparable numbers of glia and mature granule neurones, and equivalent dentate gyrus, volume across donors of all ages. Older subjects without major neurological or psychiatric disease demonstrate preserved neurogenesis. Harnessing and reprogramming this pool of cells could be a promising opportunity for combatting neurodegenerative diseases.

Cell Stem Cell. 2018;22(4):589–599.e5.

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