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THE GHOST OF CHRISTMASES PAST

Some researchers dream of a ‘smash-hit’ impactful paper; perhaps one with over 1000 citations. Van der Geer *et al.* have this honour, with only one slight caveat. Their paper has never existed. Sitting as a salutary lesson that not every academic author reads each paper they cite fully, this paper is also from a *Journal* that has never existed; the *Journal of Scientific Communication*. The reference is a deliberate dummy—used as a style guide—but is now unknowingly in the canon of great scientific literature; signifying nothing. RetractionWatch <https://retractionwatch.com/2017/11/14/phantom-reference-made-article-got-almost-400-citations/> (Accessed 10 October 2020)

GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT

It may be a traditional time for peace and goodwill to all men, but what if that man were a sealion, and what if that sealion has epilepsy? Cronutt, a 7-year-old sealion had a perilous convulsive seizure in the water. To the rescue came pioneering (human) neurosurgeons from USCF.

They implanted embryonic brain cells extracted from a 35-day-old pig. Inhibitory cell implants had previously been used by the Baraban lab to treat murine epilepsy. We have to wait on the longer-term efficacy of the treatment, but it marks the first time this has been attempted in a large mammal.

<https://www.ucsf.edu/news/2020/10/418746/struggling-sea-lions-may-benefit-ucsf-neuroscience-research>

GHOST OF CHRISTMASES YET TO COME

In the year that the NHS has finally abandoned the fax (which comes as a great relief to me, as I never really got to grips with those new-fangled things) the future may be visible: bedside low-field MR (0.064T). A study of 50 people (20 with COVID-19) identified relevant acute abnormalities 74% of the time—with no scan-related complications. The device is on wheels, plugs in to a standard plug socket, uses no cryogens and the safety perimeter had a radius of 79 cm. This technique opens up the opportunity for rapid or serial scanning in

intensive care. Or an expeditious way of imaging Christmas presents, without unwrapping.

JAMA Neurol. 8 September 2020: e203263

BOXING DAY

Wrap up warm and take in a Boxing Day treat, like a local derby rugby match. But do you need your head read if you play the game? On average (between 2002 and 2019) one professional rugby player gets injured per match; and on average they are off for 25 days. The tackle is the most dangerous part of the sport, accounting for 43% of injuries. Head injury accounts for 21% of all injuries in the modern era (2014 to date) which is thought to partly reflect players and medics being more likely to report head injury (figure 1).

Br J Sports Med. 12 October 2020: bjsports-2020-102529.

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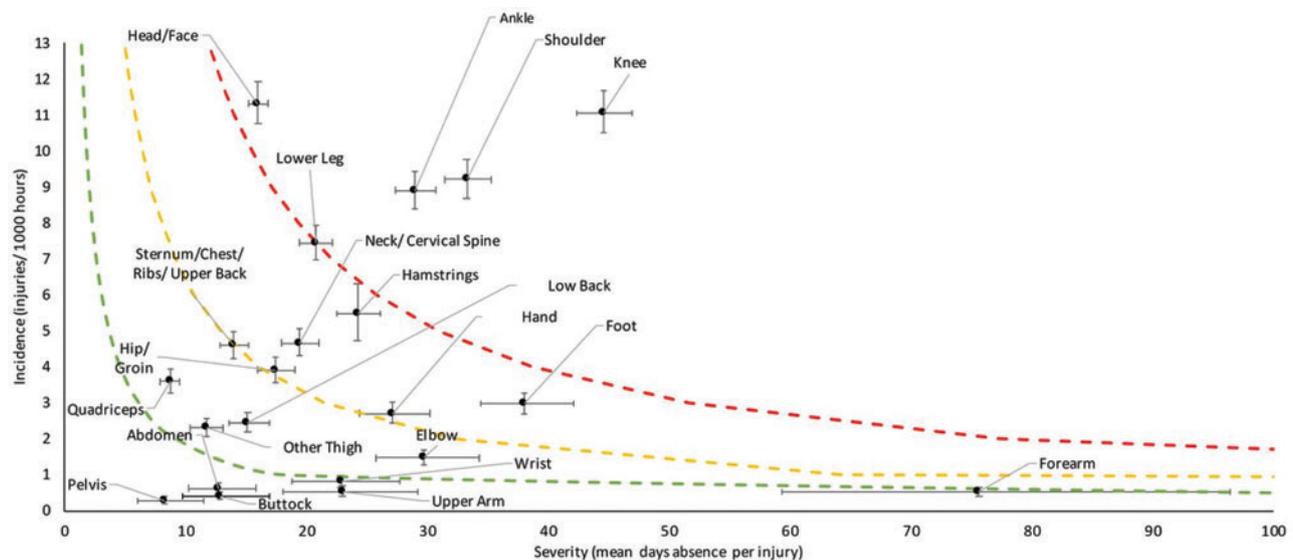


Figure 1 Pattern of injury prevalence v severity. So if the new year is looking bleak and you want a few weeks off work, pick your favoured injury and its corresponding time away.