THE MOST MEMORABLE MEDICAL MOMENTS OF 2004-2005: What Does The Encyclopedia Say About These Important Events? Please Check Out Our Analyses, As We Slow The Spin To Let Reality In

1) ***Mad Cow Disease***. Several days before ushering in the 2004 New Year, America experienced its first Mad Cow. Although the government was quick to quash our fears, and continues to issue statements regarding the safety of the multi-billion dollar U.S. beef industry, those who don't rely solely on "official" sources of news have found firm ground to support an altogether different story. In fact, some respected medical researchers believe Mad Cow Disease (**B**ovine **S**pongiform **E**ncephalopathy, BSE) is so dangerous it may one day eclipse AIDS as a killer of humans. We invite you to read our analysis of the subject, which we believe is the most comprehensive overview of Mad Cow Disease ever written. But if you are a meat maven, take heed. This article may blow your mind—figuratively, of course—as opposed to the real disease which destroys the mind by riddling the brain with microscopic holes. Kind of like Swiss cheese. But in this case, American brain.

2) ***Cardiac Bypass Surgery***. President Clinton's recent bypass surgery gives cause to take a closer look at this operation which fills Western medical coffers by the billions of dollars annually. Notwithstanding the benefits accrued to the surgeons and hospitals who perform the operation, cardiac bypass surgery is fraught with problems.

Is this type of surgery effective? That is, does it actually do what it promises—to save and/or improve lives? The largest medical study of its kind, the Coronary Artery Surgery Study (CASS), found that regardless of whether one, two, or all three major coronary arteries are blocked—independent of the severity of the blockage—patients progressed well without surgery, having a fatality rate of under 2% per year. Those receiving bypass surgery during the same time period had a fatality rate of over 10%—over five times as high.

Additional problems associated with this operation were elucidated in the CASS study: a) Bypass surgery patients have a higher risk of having a subsequent heart attack in comparison to patients who are treated with drug therapy, b) The mechanical (cardiopulmonary) pump used during most bypass procedures can cause long-term brain damage. Duke University researchers recently reported that 42% of those tested showed signs of cognitive impairment as long as five years after bypass surgery, c) Up to one third of those over 80 years old die within one year following bypass surgery, d) Due to changes in the flow of blood, that portion of the artery upstream from the graft site has a plaque formation rate 10 times that of a normal artery, e) Each beat of a healthy heart pumps out 50% or more of the blood it contains. The percentage (%) pumped with each beat is called the *ejection fraction*. About 90% of all bypass surgeries are performed on patients with an ejection fraction over 50%. This means that up to 90% of all cardiac bypass surgeries may be unnecessary. Who woulda thought?

3) ***Arthritis Pain-Killing Drugs (NSAIDs)***. As you may have heard, in late 2004 and early 2005, Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs took a beating in the press. The pharmaceutical giant Merck voluntarily removed Vioxx from the market after it became apparent the drug causes a significantly increased risk of heart attack and stroke —an increase of about 33%. This is information the manufacturers have known for years. The reality is this drug has killed and significantly harmed tens of thousands of people since it was introduced for sale in 1999—at the rate of about 50 deaths each day in the U.S., according to David Graham, M.D., M.P.H., Associate Director of the FDA's Office of Drug Safety. In early 2005, an FDA advisory panel (many of whom had drug company ties) voted to permit Vioxx to continue being sold in spite of the fact the drug has killed 50,000 of its American users—a detail well known to FDA "scientists." It has now been disclosed that virtually all types of NSAIDs cause cardiovascular disease to the tune of many thousands of cases annually.

AND, in early January 2005, the public was also informed by the media that a RECENT (actually, 19 month old) journal article by a Baylor University gastroenterologist found that the NSAID class of drugs can damage the stomach and intestines. What nobody (but us, and precious few others) bothered to inform the public is that a 1998 article published in the *American Journal of Medicine* told its readership that each year in the United States, more that 16,000 arthritis patients die from taking NSAIDs, and over 100,000 people are hospitalized, due mostly to gastrointestinal damage including bleeding and perforation.

Even still, the rest of the story hasn't been told. The REAL story is that *both* the new COX-2 NSAIDs (including Vioxx, Celebrex and Bextra) AND traditional NSAIDs (such as indomethacin) actually WORSEN the underlying condition whose symptoms they are supposed to treat. They "perpetuate the basic, underlying degenerative arthritic process even though the disease's superficial symptoms may be lessened." These drugs *accelerate cartilage destruction*

and inhibit cartilage formation. The short-term pain relief offered by NSAIDs is "achieved at the cost of an increased propensity to long-term tissue damage…" This has been known about indomethacin (Indocin®) since 1979—for more than two dozen years. Read all about it in *The Encyclopedia*.

4) ***Christopher Reeve's Death***. On October 10, 2004, actor Chris Reeve died of complications resulting from his spinal cord injury. Reeve's horseback-riding accident focused the world's attention on the devastating severity that results from this type of CNS trauma. Although he played Superman on the silver screen, Reeve was powerless to heal himself in real life. In fact, for years he had to be strapped into his wheelchair just to sit upright. Even the life-giving act of breathing, which occurs automatically and without consideration for most of us, was far from routine for Mr. Reeve. Following the accident, each breath required the assistance of a complex mechanical device. Although somewhat improved, he was never able to walk or perform most of life's day-to-day activities which most of us take for granted.

In real life there are medical supermen who may have been able to help Chris Reeve. During the 1960s, Dr. Harry S. Goldsmith of the University of Nevada School of Medicine developed a surgical technique known as *omental transposition*. Although the technique has been largely ignored in the U.S., surgeons in many other countries have used omental transposition effectively to treat a range of either age-related or traumatically-induced neuropathic conditions including Alzheimer's disease, cerebral palsy, Parkinson's disease, stroke, and spinal cord injury. In China alone over 5,000 omental transpositions have been successfully performed. The literature speaks for itself about the amazing results that have been achieved using this technique.

A group of researchers at the Uniformed Services University in Maryland have performed groundbreaking research using laser light. For the first time ever, the severed spinal cords of mammals have been fused together using the coherent, low-intensity light of a laser beam. Although the researchers don't fully understand the mechanism(s) behind the remarkable spine-mending results, they believe the light alters the behavior of cells, allowing the neurons of the spinal cord to "regroup," which in turn allows the spinal cord to refuse. The researchers expressed that Mr. Reeve might have recovered had he been lasered in the days following his injury.

According to the co-discoverer of its therapeutic properties, Dr. Stanley Jacob of the University of Oregon Medical School believes the substance DMSO operates on an entirely new therapeutic principle. As such, it benefits a wide range of ailments and performs a variety of functions. One of the most striking areas of benefit is in the treatment of brain and spinal cord injuries. When administered intravenously (IV) within 90 minutes of the injury, the substance can produce the miraculous result of preventing paralysis. Dr. Jacob and others have documented beyond question this amazing ability of DMSO, and believe that if it were routinely administered soon after the trauma—e.g., in the ambulance setting—thousands of deaths and physical hardships could be prevented. Read more about this wonder substance as well as other miraculous techniques for treating spinal cord injury in *The Encyclopedia of Medical Breakthroughs & Forbidden Treatments*.

5) ***Johnny Carson's Death***. The call "Heeeeeeeere's Johnny" will hereafter conjure a nostalgic, albeit hollow ring. Loved for decades by much of the Western world, Johnny Carson died of emphysema on January 25, 2005. Although emphysema usually affects older people as the result of long-term damage to the lungs caused by smoking, it also can affect people employed in certain industries, such as miners. Johnny was known to be an avid smoker, and the world was alerted to his medical condition as early as 2002.

Oxygen is absorbed into the bloodstream through tiny air sacs in the lungs called *alveoli*. Emphysema is a progressive disease of the lungs that occurs when the alveoli lose their natural elasticity and do not allow spent air to properly exit the lungs. Those suffering from emphysema also have difficulty uptaking fresh air, causing a depletion of oxygen to all cells of the body—with many attendant health problems including fatigue, weight loss and, as in Johnny's case, even death. According to a recent article published in the *European Respiratory Journal*, researchers at King's College London have been able to restore significant function of the alveoli in rats by administering *retinoic acid*. Both the number and size of the alveoli returned to normal when the animals were given this natural substance, a derivative of vitamin A. The lung exchange of gasses normalized and breathing was facilitated significantly. The researchers suggested that retinoic acid works by triggering key genes which enable the alveoli to recover.

These results raise hopes the treatment will also be effective in humans. In scientific research performed on animals, the key question is whether the results obtained from these types of studies will "transfer" to humans. Specifically, if it works on rats, will it also be effective on humans. In the present case, research on emphysema in

humans taking retinoic acid is in its infancy. However, given the similarity of behavior in recent times between the two animals, the distinction between the species seems to be narrowing—which could have both beneficial treatment and rather scary global ramifications.

Could Johnny's life have been saved—or significantly extended—using this technique *and others* we describe that were possibly unknown to his doctors? The answer to this question will never be known.

6) ***Post Traumatic Stress Disorder/Post-Combat Syndrome Disorder*** *of Returning American Combat Soldiers.* War causes more casualties than occur directly on the battlefield. Psychological trauma often accompanies its victims for the remainder of their lives. We've seen this in other recent wars. For example, many of America's homeless are Vietnam vets whose lives were/are in great disarray. Like Humpty Dumpty, all of our potions and medical men can't put their lives together again.

But wait! The pharmaceutical companies think they have the answer in the form of a pill—the class of medication known as beta blockers, specifically propranolol (Inderal®). This drug is typically used to treat ailments including hypertension, angina pectoris, irregular heart beat, and migraines. Not unlike most pharmaceuticals which use synthetic molecules to do their work, propranolol [1-(Isopropylamino)-3-(1-naphthyloxy)-2-propanol hydrochloride] has many untoward side effects, including abdominal cramps, colitis, congestive heart failure, constipation, decreased sexual ability, depression, diarrhea, difficulty breathing, disorientation, dry eyes, fever with sore throat, hair loss, hallucinations, headache, light-headedness, low blood pressure, lupus erythematosus, memory loss, nausea, rash, reddish or purplish spots on the skin, slow heartbeat, tingling, prickling in hands, tiredness, trouble sleeping, upset stomach, visual changes, vomiting, and weakness.

Did you catch it? Memory loss! One function beta blockers perform is to block the memory-stimulating effects of stress hormones upon the body—specifically adrenaline. Propranolol blocks the effect of adrenaline upon areas of the brain involved in memory formation. It has the effect of disconnecting emotions from memory. The President's Council on Bioethics commented in 2003 on this approach. The drug "risks making shameful acts seem less shameful, or terrible acts less terrible, than they really are...It's the morning-after pill for just about anything that produces regret, remorse, pain, or guilt," said Dr. Leon Kass, who chaired the President's Council.

For those who are inclined to avoid the pharmaceutical approach, there's another technique that works almost as fast as popping a pill, but with no accompanying side-effects. This new therapeutic technique, called Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing, is changing the landscape of traditional psychotherapy, as it's often able to accomplish in one session what traditionally has taken years to accomplish with other methods of therapy. According to the technique, the client is led by the therapist to move his/her eyes back and forth following the therapist's fingers across the client's field of vision for 20-30 seconds (or longer), while at the same time consciously thinking about the most vivid visual image (negative thought and body sensations) of the traumatic memory. The lateral shifting of the eyes is believed to greatly increase the brain's own ability to process information. Consequently, EMDR results in rapid cognitive restructuring of the traumatic event. The individual still remembers the event vividly, but *the associated intrusive thoughts and emotions* are reprocessed, and thereby lessened, and for all practical purposes fundamentally changed for the long term. Similar accelerated reprocessing occurs during dreaming as the eyes move back-and-forth in rapid eye movement, or REM sleep.

On the basis of many controlled studies, EMDR is designated as an effective treatment for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder by the International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies, the Northern Ireland Department of Health, and the Israeli National Council for Mental Health. Many clinicians who practice EMDR describe it as being more effective than any other method in treating stress, anxiety and trauma. Those treated by the method describe the results as near miraculous.

7) ***Bird Flu (H5N1 Type A Virus)***. During the last several months of 2004 and into 2005, there has been increasing discussion of new Asian varieties of influenza—specifically what is being called Bird (Avian) Flu, designated H5N1. The "H" and the "A" are two specific glycoproteins on the surface coating of the viral particles. They serve a primary role in whether such particles are able to bind to healthy cells. If this "docking" can be prevented, the viral pathogens pose NO threat of infection. Substances that interfere with H and A are strongly antiviral. There are a number of such readily-available natural preparations—discussed in the Colds & Flu section—that are able to defeat many strains of influenza, including the Type A Orthomyxoviruses. Now's the time to learn how to be cold and flu free—by reading *The Encyclopedia of Medical Breakthroughs & Forbidden Treatments.*