

Demand for Employers to provide hormone benefits¹

After decades of maintaining a stiff upper lip to compete on equal terms with men, professional women are now confident enough to ask for help to deal with 'female problems'. A recent report says 14 million working days a year are lost among the 4.3 million women of menopausal age because of debilitating hormonal symptoms, and many talented women are abandoning the idea of career progression altogether^{2,3}.

A Dutch study of 33,000 women indicated an average loss of nine days of productivity a year because of period pain, with few wanting to admit the problem. Employers are being urged to develop better flexible working policies to remove stigma, and provide more help to female staff⁴, while the Labour Party has announced such policies should become mandatory⁵.

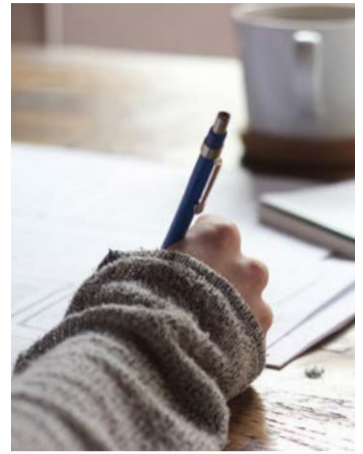
[1] <https://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/9/6/e026186>

[2] <https://www.hrreview.co.uk/hr-news/menopause-costs-uk-economy-14-million-working-days-per-year/115754>

[3] <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-7438585/Dont-let-menopause-murder-career.html>

[4] <https://www.healthinsuranceandprotection.com/healthcare/pmi/painful-periods-cost-women-nine-days-of-lost-productivity-a-year>

[5] <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-49781137>



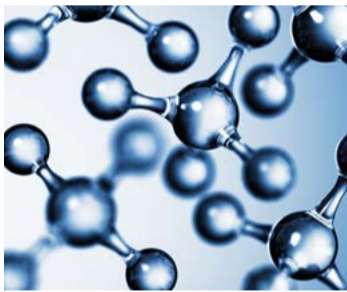
Fat Britons Outnumber Smokers

Britain's mixed attitude to weight gain has again been highlighted. Obese people now outnumber smokers two to one, with most bowel, ovarian, kidney and liver tumours caused by malfunctions in cell regeneration as a result of obesity^{1,3}. However Cancer Research UK has been criticised for highlighting these deadly self-imposed risks and fuelling a 'culture of blame'².

[1] <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-profile-for-england-2018>

[2] <https://www.thirdsector.co.uk/cancer-research-uk-defends-harmful-misleading-obesity-campaign/communications/article/1590155>

[3] <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-7308003/One-year-obesity-slashes-womens-chances-surviving-cancer.html>



Gene screening – an expanding minefield

Thousands of people including half the population of Iceland, have provided DNA to help identify gene variants associated with disease, and hasten progress towards 'personalised' drugs, where patients will get treatments matched to their gene profile¹. The databases, which are so far limited to white populations, may transmit distressing information about 'wrong paternity,' and raise the alarming question of what people are meant to do with the results of a test showing for example, they have a genetic risk of breast cancer².

[1] <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-49090754>

[2] <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/dna-test-kits-creating-family-rifts-82cxlblmp>

Routine Health Checks shown to be Pointless

Health checks have no impact on preventing death or heart disease and are not cost effective because patients suffer over-diagnosis and unnecessary treatment^{1,2}. The checks have long been regarded as a convenient smoke screen for the inadequacies of NHS treatment. That perspective has been backed by the new analysis of data from 250,000 people. A previous study showed that people told they had high blood pressure simply took more time off work³.

[1] <https://ebm.bmj.com/content/ebmed/early/2019/09/06/bmjebm-2019-111227.full.pdf>

[2] <https://www.cochranelibrary.com/cdsr/doi/10.1002/14651858.CD009009.pub3/full>

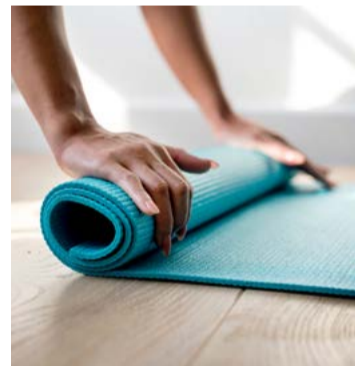
[3] <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/692548>

'Prehabilitation' aids Recovery from Cancer Treatment

Prehabilitation can better equip cancer patients for toxic blasts of chemo and radiotherapy and speed their return to work. Fitness, mental health and optimum nutrition training can make a huge difference to cancer outcomes among people able to take control of their lives, according to a joint report by Macmillan Cancer Support, the National Institute of Health Research and the Royal College of Anaesthetists¹. However a response in the British Medical Journal poured cold water on 'prehab' and gave myriad reasons why it wouldn't work². Patients would feel under pressure, the overstretched NHS cancer treatment workforce could not provide the service and lifestyle interventions would not be accessed by the lowest social groups with the highest risk of cancer, it said.

[1] <https://www.macmillan.org.uk/assets/prehabilitation-guidance-for-people-with-cancer.pdf>

[2] https://www.bmj.com/content/366/bmj.l5120?utm_source=etoc&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=tbmj&utm_content=weekly&utm_term=20190909



Surgery doubles the risk of Long Term Memory Damage

If there weren't enough obvious reasons to stay out of hospital, research has now shown any major operation ages your memory by an average of five months¹. The review of 19 years of health data from 7,000 Whitehall civil servants, found the risk of 'significant cognitive decline' rose from one in 40 among the group who never had surgery to one in 18 among those that had. The study follows many others showing surgical operations are bad for the mind². It is not clear if the damage is caused by stress or anaesthetic drugs, but it raises the question of whether patients should be warned of the risk of brain damage as part of the informed consent process.

[1] <https://www.bmj.com/content/366/bmj.l4466>

[2] <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2018-04-dont-memory-loss-surgery.html>



...And your Anaesthetist may be Alarmingly Exhausted

Almost half of consultant anaesthetists admit they have crashed their car or had a near miss on the way home from work, according to a survey of almost 4,000 of them¹. Almost all said they suffered major fatigue and 60% said they had felt too tired to drive but most had driven anyway. While the survey included some terrifying crash anecdotes, it did not record any confessions of clinical errors...

[1] https://www.bmj.com/content/366/bmj.l5341?utm_source=etoc&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=tbmj&utm_content=weekly&utm_term=20190909

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