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IN BRIEF

HUNTINGTON DISEASE

Reorganization of functional connectivity in patients with prodromal Huntington disease

A new study provides detailed insight into changes in brain connectivity associated with prodromal Huntington disease. People with the disease-linked huntingtin allele who did not yet have substantial motor symptoms showed weakened frontostriatal connectivity and increased connection strength between frontal and posterior areas. These changes did not correlate with cognitive dysfunction, which was best predicted by increased whole-brain connectivity to the right thalamus and right inferior parietal lobe.

Original article Harrington, D. L. *et al.* Network topology and functional connectivity disturbances precede the onset of Huntington's disease. *Brain* doi:10.1093/brain/awv145

PARKINSON DISEASE

High infection burden in patients with Parkinson disease

Patients with Parkinson disease (PD) were found to be more likely to have evidence of viral and bacterial infections than were controls. Bu and colleagues assessed serum samples for antibodies against cytomegalovirus, Epstein–Barr virus, *Borrelia burgdorferi*, *Helicobacter pylori* and other pathogens. Seropositivity for multiple pathogens was linked to an increased risk of PD, providing evidence that infection burden might contribute to the pathogenesis of this disease.

Original article Bu, X.-L. *et al.* The association between infectious burden and Parkinson's disease: a case-control study. *Parkinsonism Relat. Disord.* doi:10.1016/j.parkreldis.2015.05.015

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

Grey matter atrophy in the thoracic spinal cord is associated with disability in patients with multiple sclerosis

Spinal cord MRI suggests that grey matter atrophy in the thoracic cord is an important source of disability in patients with multiple sclerosis (MS). Regina Schlaeger and colleagues imaged multiple levels of the cervical and thoracic spinal cords of patients with relapsing or progressive MS. The cross-sectional areas of grey matter, white matter and the total cord all inversely correlated with disability scores, but cervical and thoracic cord grey matter areas, respectively, were the two most predictive measures.

Original article Schlaeger, R. *et al.* Association between thoracic spinal cord grey matter atrophy and disability in multiple sclerosis. *JAMA Neurol.* doi:10.1001/jamaneurol.2015.0993

NEURO-ONCOLOGY

A common class of blood pressure drugs provides modest benefit to patients with glioblastoma

Patients with glioblastoma taking angiotensin-II inhibitors tend to have better prognoses than do other patients. In a series of 81 consecutive patients treated with temozolomide and radiotherapy, those prescribed angiotensin-II inhibitors for blood pressure or heart disease had increased likelihood of being functionally independent 6 months after radiotherapy, and on average gained 4 months of overall survival. The investigators speculate that this class of drugs could slow angiogenesis in the tumour, thus inhibiting growth.

Original article Januel, E. *et al.* Impact of renin-angiotensin system blockade on clinical outcome in glioblastoma. *Eur. J. Neurol.* doi:10.1111/ene.12746