

# Other journals in brief

A selection of abstracts of clinically relevant papers from other journals.

The abstracts on this page have been chosen and edited by Paul Hellyer

## Time pressures in general medical practice

Much to do with nothing: microsimulation study on time management in primary care

Caverley T, Hayward RA, Burke J F. *BMJ* 2018; **363**: DOI: 10.1136/bmj.k4983.

## Even doctors only have 24 hours in a day

Shared decision making in preventive care is time consuming. It involves ensuring that the patient understands the condition for which prevention is targeted, understands the risks and benefits of the service offered, has judged their own values with regard to these risks and has engaged comfortably in the decision making process.

This satirical paper suggests that doctors complain frequently about a lack of time to be able to offer preventive options to patients yet come under increasing pressure from managers to do so. This model suggests that doctors have a lot of spare time and an additional 30 hours per week could be reallocated from grooming and self care, leisure time and unnecessary sleep. The costs of this are reasonable, leading only to a 17% increase in early retirements. The results clarify the need of management to 'stuff clinical work into ... all remaining crannies of a doctor's non-working time.' The authors highlight the absurdity of ignoring the fact that a doctor's day cannot exceed 24 hours.

DOI: 10.1038/sj.bdj.2019.116

## Little health benefit from using non-sugar sweeteners ....

Association between intake of non-sugar sweeteners and health outcomes: systematic review and meta-analyses of randomised and non-randomised controlled trials and observational studies

Toews I, Lohner S, de Gaudry D, Sommer H, Meerpohl J. *BMJ* 2019; **364**: DOI: 10.1136/bmj.k4718.

## .... but potential harm cannot be ruled out

Foods containing non-sugar sweeteners (NSS) are gaining popularity. However, the evidence for the health benefits of NSS is conflicting with some studies showing reduced risk of type 2 diabetes and obesity but others showing an increased risk of weight gain and cancer. NSS are usually synthetic, sweeter, and contain fewer (or no) calories than sucrose. Each NSS is metabolised differently in the body. Current evidence suggests that many (but not all) sweeteners are safe to use in food preparation at or below recommended levels of daily intake.

For health outcomes including body weight management, diabetes, eating behaviour, cancer and blood pressure, this comprehensive systematic review found there to be no difference between NSS intake versus no intake or between different doses of NSS. There was no evidence of health benefits. However, potential harms could not be excluded. In all cases, the quality of evidence ranged from very low to moderate.

DOI: 10.1038/sj.bdj.2019.117

## Maladjusted loupes cause headaches and eye strain

Out of the loupe: the presence of co-axial misalignment of surgical loupes among dental professionals

Wen W, Kanji Z, Laronde D, Shariati B, Rucker L. *J Am Dent Assoc* 2018; **150**: 49–57.

## 82% of dental care professionals found to have misaligned loupes

Surgical loupes provide both visual and postural benefits. Two types of loupes are identified, 'through the lens' (TTL) and 'front-lens mounted' (FLM). FLM are subdivided into those with full vertical alignment possibility and those for which the vertical adjustment is limited to bending the frames and/or hinges.

Three criteria require adjustment for the loupes to be of maximum efficiency – working distance, declination angle and co-axial alignment. Co-axial alignment is 'the vertical alignment between the magnified image seen through the loupes and the observed object'. Errors in co-axial alignment may lead to chromatic aberrations, eyestrain, headaches and vertigo and have a potential deleterious effect on patient safety and care.

Using a tested measurement tool, of 97 dental professionals in British Columbia, Canada, this study found that 82% were practicing with vertically misaligned loupes. There was no difference found between the types of loupes or between manufacturers, users' gender, lengths of time in practice and clinical roles.

DOI: 10.1038/sj.bdj.2019.118

## Learning the art of letting go

Excellence in surgery : becoming the 'best' you can be

de Santibanes E, Bushnell V C, Pellegrini C. *Bull Am Coll Surg* 2018; **103**: 10-16.

## The 'best' are more than just technically excellent

Putting the patient first and doing no harm, technical skills and a lack of haste (operating slowly but thinking quickly) could be seen as the givens of an excellent operator.

However, other criteria give a wider view of what constitutes the best surgeon. Mentorship provides guidance, advice, support and counsel and many clinicians will have several mentors with different skill sets. The best surgeons do not feel weakened by asking for help, rather they are strengthened to improve patient care. Equally they are willing to pass on their skills to the next generations, with no sense of 'egotism and senseless narcissism.'

The motivation to improve comes from continuous learning and a willingness to audit and analyse results. A sense of enjoyment helps, as does being surrounded by a good team. The best surgeons care about their teams, encourage them and give them praise.

It is easy to become drained and bitter with the realities of the work but it is essential to learn the art of letting go, recognising that others have need of you too, as parent or spouse, brother or sister, son or daughter, or friend.

DOI: 10.1038/sj.bdj.2019.119