

IN BRIEF

ULCERATIVE COLITIS

In this open-label study, 20 patients with ulcerative colitis were given adalimumab, a fully human monoclonal antibody to tumor necrosis factor (TNF). 13 patients were intolerant or unresponsive to the chimeric anti-TNF antibody infliximab. Adalimumab was well tolerated and seemed to be beneficial for all patients, regardless of whether or not they were treatment naïve or previously exposed to infliximab.

Original article Afif, W. *et al.* Open label study of adalimumab in patients with ulcerative colitis including those with prior loss of response or intolerance to infliximab. *Inflamm. Bowel Dis.* **15**, 1302–1307 (2009).

ENDOSCOPY

Patients attending for endoscopy are usually anxious. In a randomized controlled trial, El Hassan and colleagues found that listening to self-selected music for 15 min before endoscopy significantly reduced anxiety scores in all age groups, regardless of procedure type. The authors conclude that playing music within the endoscopy unit will improve the well-being of patients.

Original article El Hassan, H., McKeown, K. & Muller, A. F. Clinical trial: music reduces anxiety levels in patients attending for endoscopy. *Aliment. Pharmacol. Ther.* **30**, 718–724 (2009).

NUTRITION

Heavy beer drinkers are often thought to develop a 'beer belly'. Schütze *et al.* found a positive association between beer consumption and an 8.5 year change in waist circumference in men taking part in the EPIC–Potsdam study. However, as adjustment for concurrent body weight and hip circumference decreased the effect markedly, there seems to be no site-specific effect of beer on the abdomen.

Original article Schütze, M. *et al.* Beer consumption and the 'beer belly': scientific basis or common belief? *Eur. J. Clin. Nutr.* **63**, 1143–1149 (2009).

HEPATITIS

The all-cause mortality of 1,645 HCV-infected patients in the Swiss Hepatitis C Cohort Study was compared with that of the Swiss general population. The all-cause standardized mortality ratio (SMR) was 4.5, but patients who were not cirrhotic and were not heavy alcohol users showed no excess mortality (SMR 1.1), which emphasizes the importance of preventing or slowing progression to cirrhosis.

Original article Prasad, L. *et al.* Little evidence that hepatitis C virus leads to a higher risk of mortality in the absence of cirrhosis and excess alcohol intake: the Swiss Hepatitis C Cohort Study. *J. Viral Hepat.* **16**, 644–649 (2009).