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IN BRIEF

NEURODEGENERATIVE DISEASE

Pridopidine for Huntington disease falls short of primary efficacy end point in phase III trial

Despite promising phase II results, a phase III trial has failed to confirm that the dopaminergic stabilizer pridopidine improves motor function in patients with Huntington disease (HD). In the randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled trial, which involved 437 patients with HD, pridopidine produced no significant improvement with regard to the primary end point—change in the modified motor score. The investigators suggest, however, that the effects of the drug on specific aspects of motor function might warrant further study.

Original article de Yebenes, J. G. *et al.* Pridopidine for the treatment of motor function in patients with Huntington's disease: a phase 3, randomised, double-blind, placebo-controlled trial. *Lancet Neurol.* **10**, 1049–1057 (2011)

ALZHEIMER DISEASE

A novel therapeutic approach for Alzheimer disease?

Researchers in Germany have shown that the green tea polyphenol epigallocatechin gallate (EGCG), administered in combination with laser irradiation, can reduce amyloid- β aggregation in human neuroblastoma cells. Previous animal studies have indicated that EGCG can cross the blood–brain barrier, and that near-infrared laser light can penetrate several centimeters into the brain. Taken together, these findings raise the possibility of developing this approach as a therapy for Alzheimer disease.

Original article Sommer, A. P. *et al.* 670 nm laser light and EGCG complementarily reduce amyloid- β aggregates in human neuroblastoma cells: basis for treatment of Alzheimer's disease? *Photomed. Laser Surg.* doi:10.1089/pho.2011.3073

STROKE

Steroids may improve outcome in acute hemorrhagic stroke

A new two-center study provides support for the use of intravenous dexamethasone in patients with acute hemorrhagic stroke—a treatment strategy that is employed routinely at the University Hospital of Heraklion, Crete but has not been widely adopted elsewhere. Patients with acute hemorrhagic stroke who were treated in Heraklion (391 cases, 341 of whom received intravenous dexamethasone) had better outcomes than those treated at Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston, USA (510 cases, none of whom received corticosteroids).

Original article Zaganas, I. *et al.* A comparison of acute hemorrhagic stroke outcomes in 2 populations: the Crete–Boston Study. *Stroke* doi:10.1161/STROKEAHA.111.632174

IMAGING

A new diagnostic application for spinal subtraction MRI

Spontaneous intracranial hypotension (SIH) syndrome can be difficult to diagnose, and standard MRI techniques are not particularly effective at detecting the cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) leaks that characterize this condition. New research published in *Neurology*, however, indicates that spinal MRI with subtraction analysis might provide an effective, noninvasive means of detecting epidural CSF leakage in patients with SIH syndrome, and could even represent the first-line diagnostic approach in this setting.

Original article Bonetto, N. *et al.* Spinal subtraction MRI for diagnosis of epidural leakage in SIH. *Neurology* **77**, 1873–1876 (2011)