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## IN BRIEF

### PARKINSON DISEASE

#### Perception of treatment cost influences response to placebo in patients with Parkinson disease

Expectations based on treatment cost can modify the placebo effect in patients with Parkinson disease (PD), according to research published in *Neurology*. In a randomized trial, 12 patients with moderate to severe PD were informed of their allocation to a 'cheap' or 'expensive' 'injectable dopamine agonist' (actually normal saline in both cases). Of the two groups, the patients who believed they were receiving expensive treatment showed the greatest improvements in motor function.

**Original article** Espay, A. J. *et al.* Placebo effect of medication cost in Parkinson disease: a randomized double-blind study. *Neurology* doi:10.1212/WNL.0000000000001282

### MOTOR NEURON DISEASE

#### TUDCA shows early promise for the treatment of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis

A pilot study has provided evidence that the hydrophilic bile acid TUDCA is safe and possibly effective for the treatment of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS). 34 patients with ALS were randomly assigned to TUDCA or placebo as add-on therapy to riluzole. TUDCA was well tolerated, and the patients who received the drug showed significantly reduced disease progression over the 54-week treatment period compared with the placebo group.

**Original article** Elia, A. E. *et al.* Tauroursodeoxycholic acid in the treatment of patients with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis. *Eur. J. Neurol.* doi:10.1111/ene.12664

### EPILEPSY

#### A potential neurotoxic interaction between an antidepressant and an antiepileptic drug

An *in vitro* study has demonstrated a neurotoxic interaction between the selective serotonin uptake inhibitor (SSRI) sertraline and the antiepileptic drug (AED) carbamazepine. Ghosh *et al.* found that this combination of drugs—but neither drug alone—produced marked cytotoxicity in human cell lines. The new findings raise safety concerns, as SSRIs and AEDs are often co-prescribed to individuals who experience depression as a comorbidity of epilepsy.

**Original article** Ghosh, C. *et al.* Sertraline-induced potentiation of the CYP3A4-dependent neurotoxicity of carbamazepine: an *in vitro* study. *Epilepsia* doi:10.1111/epi.12923

### INFECTIOUS DISEASE

#### Dietary restriction has beneficial effects in experimental cerebral malaria

A new paper published in *Nature Communications* reports protective effects of dietary restriction in a mouse model of cerebral malaria. Temporary restriction of food intake was found to reduce accumulation of the malaria parasite in the brain—an effect that was mediated by modulation of leptin and reduced T-cell mTORC1 activity. On the basis of these findings, leptin and mTORC1 could be explored as possible targets for the treatment of cerebral malaria.

**Original article** Mejia, P. *et al.* Dietary restriction protects against experimental cerebral malaria via leptin modulation and T-cell mTORC1 suppression. *Nat. Commun.* **6**, 6050 (2015)