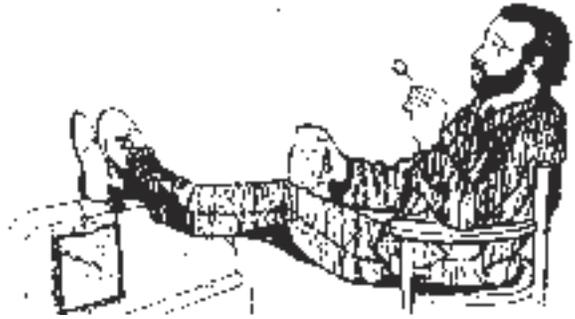

AIRhead Medical Review

Improbable diagnoses, techniques, and research

compiled by Bertha Vanatian, AIR staff



Visual Revenge of the Spider

“Acute Conjunctival Inflammation Following Contact with Squashed Spider Contents,” Geoffrey K. Isbister, *American Journal of Ophthalmology*, vol. 136, no. 3, September 2003, pp. 563-4. (Thanks to Dugald McGlashan for bringing this to our attention.) The author, who is at Mater Misericordiae Hospital, Waratah, New South Wales, Australia, explains that:

A 46-year-old man presented with a painful and inflamed eye after contents of a spider got into his right eye when he squashed the spider with a newspaper. He suffered immediate severe pain in the eye, which rapidly became red and swollen. He had conjunctival edema and periorbital swelling of the eye and severe photophobia.

Acute Conjunctival Inflammation Following Contact With Squashed Spider Contents

Geoffrey K. Isbister, BSc, MBBS, FACEM

PURPOSE: To report the effects to the eye following contact with spider contents.

DESIGN: Observational case report.

Accepted for publication Feb 28, 2003.

From the Discipline of Clinical Pharmacology, University of Newcastle, Newcastle, Australia, and Clinical Toxicologist and Emergency Physician, Newcastle Mater Misericordiae Hospital, Waratah, New South Wales, Australia.

inflamed eye after material his right eye. Approximately he had found a large hun subsequently squashed the newspaper. A small amo landed near his eye, whi into the eye. He suffered i which rapidly became red at home and then preseem ongoing severe burning g graded as 9 out of 10. T edema, and periorbital laterally across the eye in normal vision in the rig

Listening Post

“Ear Candles -- Efficacy and Safety,” Daniel R. Seely, Suzanne M. Quigley, and Alan W. Langman, *Laryngoscope*, vol. 106, no. 10, October 1996, pp. 1226-9. (Thanks to Iain Noble for bringing this to our attention.) The authors explain that:

Ear candles are a popular and inexpensive alternative health treatment advocated for cerumen removal. A hollow candle is burned with one end in the ear canal with the intent of creating negative pressure and drawing cerumen from the ear. If effective, significant savings could result from the use of ear candles. This study evaluates the efficacy and safety of this alternative method for cerumen management. Tympanometric measurements in an ear canal model demonstrated that ear candles do not produce negative pressure. A limited clinical trial (eight ears) showed no removal of cerumen from the external auditory canal. Candle wax was actually deposited in some. A survey of 122 otolaryngologists identified 21 ear injuries resulting from ear candle use. Ear candles have no benefit in the management of cerumen and may result in serious injury.

When Butt Met Bannister

“Better the Devil You Know,” T.W. Butt and D. Bannister, in *Key Cases in Psychotherapy*, W. Dryden (editor), 1987, pp. 127-47, London, CroomHelm.

Cause and Effect (1): Pollen and Suicide

“Tree Pollen Peaks Are Associated with Increased Nonviolent Suicide in Women,” T.T. Postolache, et al., *Molecular Psychiatry*, vol. 10, no. 3, March 2005, pp. 232-5.

Cause and Effect (2): Viagra and Blindness

“Nonarteritic Ischemic Optic Neuropathy Developing Soon After Use of Sildenafil (Viagra): A Report of Seven New Cases,” Howard D. Pomeranz and Abdhish R. Bhavsar, *Journal of Neuro-Ophthalmology*, vol. 25, no. 1, March 2005, pp. 9-13. (Thanks to Stephanie Vardavas for bringing this to our attention.)

We welcome your suggestions for this column. Please enclose the full citation (no abbreviations!) and, if possible, a photocopy of the paper.

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