Icky Cutesy Research Review
Research reports that are icky and/or cutesy
compiled by Alice Shirrell Kaswell, Improbable Research staff

Icky: Rifling

“Accidental Impalement Injuries of the Intraperitoneal Rectum Caused by the Barrel of the Self Loading Rifle,”
D.S. Jackson, Journal of the Royal Army Medical Corps, vol. 131, 1985, pp. 164–6. The author, at Military Wing Musgrave Park Hospital, Belfast, Northern Ireland, writes:

I report two similar cases of accidental impalement in soldiers on the barrel of the self-loading rifle....

Signalman S, aged 19... jumped off the back of an Army 4-ton lorry and impaled himself on the barrel of the SLR (self-loading rifle) of another soldier who was crouched on the ground with his weapon vertical. The victim was disimpaled by colleagues at the scene of the accident and a penetrating length of 20 cms was estimated. The barrel of the weapon was described as faeculent with “flesh” attached to the end....

Private McG aged 19 was admitted to hospital in October 1984. Whilst on patrol in the border area of Northern Ireland he attempted to climb over a fence. He leant his SLR vertically against the fence and as he climbed up, the fence collapsed....

Penetrating Anorectal Injury

An Unrecognized Hazard for Surgeons

A. R. Dennison, F.R.C.S., B. J. Britton, M.S., F.R.C.S.


Accidental anorectal injuries are becoming less common. This case, where impalement of the anorectal region by the shaft of a stool occurred to a junior surgeon at work, illustrates a previously unrecognized menace. [Key words: Impalement, anorectum, stool]

Icky: Invasive Stool Sampling


A 26-year-old doctor was assisting at a neurosurgical operation when it became necessary to use the binocular operating microscope. The stools on which all the surgeons were seated then required repositioning. They were of the standard stainless steel swivel type and screwed up and down to allow height adjustment. In some of these stools it appears that the top is able to completely unscrew from its base. When the junior surgeon replaced his weight, the two halves separated, the top falling onto the floor, with the shaft uppermost. He then fell backward, resulting in his impalement upon the unprotected shaft of the top of the stool...

Cutesy: Handy Memory

“Getting a Grip on Memory: Unilateral Hand Clenching Alters Episodic Recall,” Ruth E. Propper, Sean E. McGraw, Tad T. Brunye, and Michael Weiss, PLoS ONE, vol. 8, no. 4, 2013, p. e62474. The authors, at Montclair State University, New Jersey, Tufts University, Medford, Massachusetts, and the U.S. Army Natick Soldier Research in Natick, Massachusetts, explain:

Unilateral hand clenching can be used to test hypotheses concerning the specializations of the cerebral hemispheres during memory encoding and retrieval. We investigated this possibility by testing effects of unilateral hand clenching on episodic memory.