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Updates in Medicine

RISK FACTORS FOR ACANTHAMOEBA KERATITIS AMONG CONTACT LENS USERS

The risk of acanthamoeba keratitis increases fourfolds among individuals who use reusable contact lenses compared to those who used disposable contact lenses daily. Taking a shower while wearing the contact lenses and sleeping with contact lenses were risk factors for the infection. Those who wore daily disposable lenses were at a higher risk if they reused them... (Source: *Ophthalmology*, Aug. 8, 2022)

USPSTF DRAFT STATEMENT RECOMMENDS SCREENING ADULTS ≤64 YEARS FOR ANXIETY

Marking a first, the US Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) has recommended screening for anxiety among adults aged ≤64 years in a draft statement posted on its website. Pregnant and postpartum women should also be screened for anxiety. However, the statement does not recommend screening older adults citing lack of sufficient evidence. The draft recommendations are available in public domain for comments till 17th October.... (Source: *USPSTF*, Sept. 20, 2022)

WEARING A PEDOMETER MAY HELP INCREASE DAILY STEPS

Wearing a pedometer has a moderate effect in increasing the number of daily steps, finds a study published in the September 2022 issue of *American Journal of Health Behavior*. The participants walked 388 steps more when they wore a pedometer while walking than those who did not wear one... (Source: *American Journal of Health Behavior*, Sept. 2022).

SURGERIES WITH HIGHEST RISK FOR BLOOD TRANSFUSION

A study published in the *British Journal of Surgery* has identified 20 surgeries that are associated with the highest risk of blood transfusion. These include: Cardiac valve replacement, coronary artery bypass grafting (CABG), aortic aneurysm repair, radical cystectomy with urinary diversion, open femoral fracture repair, open radical nephrectomy, abdominal/retroperitoneal tumor excision >10 cm, vascular bypass, splenectomy, leg amputation, pancreatectomy, liver resection, bowel resection, spinal arthrodesis, arterial embolectomy, gastrectomy, myomectomy, open radical prostatectomy, total abdominal hysterectomy and endovascular repair of thoracic or abdominal aortic aneurysm... (Source: *British Journal of Surgery*, Dec. 2020)

IMPACT OF COVID-19 VACCINATION ON MENSTRUAL CYCLE LENGTH

The length of the menstrual cycle may increase by less than 1 day following coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) vaccination in some women, according to a new National Institutes of Health (NIH) study published in the *BMJ Medicine*. However, these changes are temporary. The international retrospective study analyzed 19,622 women aged 18 to 45 years mostly from the UK, US, Canada and Europe to study the change in the menstrual cycle including its length following COVID-19 vaccination. Majority were below 35 years of age. Out of these, the vaccinated group included 14,936 women with data available for at least 3 consecutive cycles before vaccination and the unvaccinated group

included 4,686 women with data available for a minimum of 4 consecutive cycles. Data was sourced from the menstrual cycle tracking application, Natural Cycles. Among the vaccinated participants, the length of the cycle in which they were vaccinated increased by less than 1 day compared with those who were not vaccinated. On average, the cycle length increased by 0.71 day after the first dose and 0.56 day after the second dose. Among those who received the two doses in one cycle, the length increased by 3.91 days. No differences in the cycle length were noted according to the type of the vaccine taken. These changes were observed more among younger women and those who had a longer cycle length prior to taking the vaccination. The increase in cycle length was temporary except among those who received both doses in the same cycle, in whom the increased length was decreased in the next cycle, but was still more than those in the unvaccinated group. Hence, women taking the COVID-19 vaccine can be counseled about the changes that may occur in the menstrual cycle length post-vaccination. They should be reassured that these changes are small and transient in nature.

(Ref: Edelman A, et al. Association between menstrual cycle length and COVID-19 vaccination: a global cohort. *BMJ Medicine*. 2022;1:e000297.)

PREGNANCY ANXIETY WITH PRETERM BIRTHS

Anxiety during pregnancy, including pregnancy anxiety is associated with preterm birth, suggests a recent study published in the journal *Health Psychology*.¹ A total of 196 women who had participated in the

Healthy Babies Before Birth study were subjected to four different anxiety scales in the first and third trimester of pregnancy to study the association between anxiety and length of gestation. These questionnaires were related to general anxiety, pregnancy anxiety and pregnancy stressors. After adjusting for confounding variables such as age, educational status, parity and obstetric risk, a robust association was seen between pregnancy-related anxiety during the third trimester and shorter gestation. Assessment of general anxiety during the first trimester also correlated with a shorter gestation. Anxiety measured by the Overall Anxiety Severity and Impairment Scale (OASIS) was predictive of early birth. Participants who had general anxiety symptoms during the first trimester and developed pregnancy anxiety in the third trimester were most likely to have a preterm delivery. Pregnant women are routinely screened for depression. Similar to depression, anxiety too is associated with adverse maternal and neonatal outcomes. Based on their findings, the authors suggest pregnancy-related anxiety as a risk factor for premature birth and recommend screening pregnant women also for symptoms of anxiety in early pregnancy and anxiety specifically due to pregnancy in the third trimester. Women who exhibit significant general anxiety symptoms should be closely monitored all through the pregnancy for any increase in their symptoms. This would help identify mothers at risk of preterm births.

(Ref: Dunkel Schetter C, et al. Anxiety in pregnancy and length of gestation: findings from the healthy babies before birth study. *Health Psychol*. 2022 Sept. 26.)

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Study Reveals 80% Increase in Alzheimer's Diseases among Older Adults with COVID-19

A study of over 6 million individuals in the US found that older adults with COVID-19 have a 50% to 80% increased risk of Alzheimer's disease within a year.

The scientist evaluated the anonymous electronic health data of 6.2 million US senior citizens who were 65 and older and received medical care between February 2020 and May 2021 but were not diagnosed with Alzheimer's. The participants were divided into two groups: one with individuals who had COVID-19 during that time and the other with no COVID-19 infection. The COVID-19 study group had more than 4,00,000 participants, compared to 5.8 million in the non-infected group.

The study results were published in the *Journal of Alzheimer's disease*. It revealed that women at least 85 years old had the highest risk of developing the illness. The researchers stated that it is uncertain whether COVID-19 causes or hastens the onset of Alzheimer's disease. (Source: *The Print*, Sept. 14, 2022)



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