
Blast from the Past

Koch Memorial Clock Tower

Of the few early landmarks from “The Ceylon Medical School”, as it was then known, still standing proud and tall is the Koch Memorial Clock Tower, erected in 1881 to perpetuate the memory of Dr. Edwin Lawson Koch, the second principal of the school. He is recorded to have been “a bold Surgeon, a successful Physician and an expert Obstetrician”. Unfortunately he held office for only two years because he died in 1877 at the age of 40 from the effects of a wound received when performing a post-mortem.

Research News

New dads can get depressed too!

Postpartum depression just doesn't happen to women, but are also present in men, reports a meta-analysis of 43 studies involving 28,004 participants. A meta-estimated 10.4% (95% CI - 8.5% to 12.7%) of men are depressed during a partner's pregnancy or during the year after the birth and the prevalence peaked three to six months after delivery (25.6%, CI - 17.3% to 36.1%). The researchers also found a significant, but moderate, correlation between maternal and paternal depression (From *Journal of American Medical Association*. 2010;303(19):1961-1969. Available at <http://jama.ama-assn.org/content/303/19/1961.full> (Accessed on February 3, 2011))

Lung Cancer patients live longer with palliative care

Patients when given simultaneous palliative care (including pain management and counselling services) at diagnosis, to complement standard oncologic care, can lead to a significant improvement in survival and quality of life in patients with metastatic non small-cell lung cancer (NSCLC) according to a randomized controlled trial of 151 patients conducted by a team at the Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston. The study reported a more than 2 month survival benefit in the intervention group along with a significantly better quality of life and lower rates of depression. This study was praised as being paradigm-shifting due to its results showing palliative care is appropriate and potentially beneficial when it is introduced at the time of diagnosis of a serious or life-limiting illness — at the same time as all other appropriate and beneficial medical therapies are initiated. (from *New England Journal of Medicine*. 2010;363:733-42, 781-2. Available at <http://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMoa1000678> (Accessed on February 4, 2011))

American Diabetes Association revises Diabetes Guidelines

An elevated glycosylated haemoglobin (HbA1c) level at or beyond the threshold of 6.5% is enough to make a diagnosis of diabetes, while levels from 5.7% to 6.4% point to high risk for developing both diabetes and cardiovascular disease, according to a new statement from the American Diabetes Association (ADA). This revised guideline promotes HbA1c as a faster, easier diagnostic test that could help reduce the number of undiagnosed patients and better identify patients with pre-diabetes. Other prominent updates in the document include new criteria for aspirin for primary prevention. "The recommendation has changed to consider aspirin therapy as a primary-prevention strategy in those with diabetes at increased cardiovascular risk," the report states. That includes men >50 years of age or women >60 years of age with at least one additional major risk factor, it says. (From *Diabetes Care*. 2010;33 Suppl 1:S4-S10. Available at http://care.diabetesjournals.org/content/33/Supplement_1/S4.full (Accessed on February 5, 2011))

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