

by Scott LaFee

MEDTRONICA

Urology Channel

www.urologychannel.com

MEDTRONICA - The Web site www.urologychannel.com can provide guidance on a host of unsettling diseases and conditions, from erectile dysfunction and incontinence to cancers of the reproductive systems. CNS Photo.A useful Web site for information and guidance on a host of unsettling diseases and conditions, from erectile dysfunction and incontinence to cancers of the reproductive systems.

LAUGHING MATTER

Laughter really is contagious, but in a good way. Indeed, British researchers say it may have evolved as a way for individuals to get along in groups.

Scientists at University College London and Imperial College have found that positive sounds like laughter or a triumphant "woo hoo" trigger responses in the same part of the listener's brain that also prepares facial muscles to smile.

"We've known for some time now that when we are talking to someone, we often mirror their behavior, copying the words they use and mimicking their gestures," said Sophie Scott, a senior research fellow at UCL's Institute of Cognitive Neuroscience. "Now we've shown that the same appears to apply to laughter, too - at least at the level of the brain."

LAUGH ABOUT IT - Scientists have found that positive sounds like laughter trigger responses in the same part of the listener's brain that also prepares facial muscles to smile. CNS Photo.Researchers played a series of sounds to volunteers hooked up to brain scanners. The sounds ranged from laughter and giggling to screams and retching. All of the sounds spurred activity in the brain's premotor cortical region, which prepares facial muscles to respond accordingly, but positive sounds evoked a stronger response.

This is why, researchers suggest, people respond to laughter or cheering with an involuntary smile.

"We usually encounter positive emotions, such as laughter or cheering, in group situations," Scott said. "This response in the brain, automatically priming us to smile or laugh, provides a way of mirroring the behavior of others, something which helps us interact socially. It could play an important role in building strong bonds between individuals and groups."

BODY OF KNOWLEDGE

The human brain can store perhaps 10 trillion bytes of memory.

GET ME THAT. STAT!

In a UCLA study of nearly 200 pregnant women, ages 14 to 25, roughly half of the women said they had heard of intrauterine devices, but 71 percent were unaware of their safety and 58 percent did not know about their effectiveness in preventing pregnancy.

STORIES FOR THE WAITING ROOM

In rural England and the backwoods of early America, it was believed that a child could be cured of whooping cough by riding on the back of a bear. Another cure, according to English folk wisdom, was eating bread and butter provided by a married couple named John and Joan.

DOC TALK

UBI - Unexplained Beer Injury, referring to Sunday morning emergency room patients who arrive with black eyes or swollen knees and no idea of how they got them.

PHOBIA OF THE WEEK

Tapinophobia - fear of being contagious.

BEST MEDICINE

Two babies were born on the same day at the same hospital. They lay there and looked at each other. Their families came and took them away. Eighty years later, by a bizarre coincidence, they lay in the same hospital, on their deathbeds, next to each other.

One of them looked at the other and said, "So, what did you think?"

OBSERVATION

If beef is your idea of "real food for real people," you'd better live real close to a real good hospital.

- Dr. Neal Barnard, Physician Committee for Responsible Medicine

LAST WORDS

"I am a queen, but I have not the power to move my arms."

- Louise, Queen of Prussia (1776-1810)

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