

by Scott_LaFee

MEDTRONICA

The Never-Ending Squirrel Tale

www.squirreltales.com

For parents of children with cancer, life can sometimes seem lonely and despairing. This site offers solace and practical advice, lighthearted and inspiring stories and tips from other parents in the same situation.

CUT ONCE, THINK TWICE

As if men needed more reasons to balk, a Northwestern University study suggests vasectomies may be linked with an increased risk of contracting a rare form of dementia.

Primary Progressive Aphasia, or PPA, impairs a person's understanding of language and the ability to express oneself. PPA generally strikes victims in their 40s and 50s.

Spurred by a patient who believed his PPA was linked to an earlier vasectomy, Sandra Weintraub, a clinical neuropsychologist at Northwestern, studied 47 men with PPA and 57 men free of cognitive impairment, all ages 55 to 80. She found that 40 percent of the PPA patients had undergone vasectomies, compared with just 16 percent of the control group.

CUT ONCE, THINK TWICE - A university study suggests vasectomies may be linked with an increased risk of contracting a rare form of dementia. CNS Photo.

MEDTRONICA - The Never-Ending Squirrel Tale Web site at www.squirreltales.com is for parents of children with cancer. It offers solace and practical advice, lighthearted and inspiring stories and tips from other parents in the same situation. CNS Photo.

The findings do not prove cause and effect, Weintraub cautioned. But she does propose a possible theory behind the link: In humans, there is a blood-testes barrier similar to the blood-brain barrier. Vasectomies rupture this barrier, allowing semen to enter the bloodstream. "Sixty to 70 percent of men will develop antibodies which try to kill the sperm," Weintraub said. "The question is whether these antibodies are somehow interacting with the brain, too."

Weintraub says she will expand her research nationally.

BODY OF KNOWLEDGE

A bowl of lime Jell-O, when hooked up to an EKG machine, can exhibit movements almost identical to the brain waves of a healthy adult.

BEST MEDICINE

A distraught patient telephoned her doctor's office.

"Doctor, is it true that I'm to take the medication you prescribed for the rest of my life?" she asked.

"Yes, I'm afraid so," replied the doctor.

The woman remained silent for a few moments, then continued, "I'm wondering in that case just how serious is my condition? This prescription is marked 'No Refills.'"

NEVER SAY DIET

Ernest Hemmingway wrote most of his works on a diet of peanut butter sandwiches.

PHOBIA OF THE WEEK

Venustraphobia - fear of beautiful women

LAST WORDS

I see black light.

- French writer and statesman Victor Hugo (1802-1885)

OBSERVATION

A rule of thumb in the matter of medical advice is to take everything any doctor says with a grain of aspirin.

- Goodman Ace

STORIES FOR THE WAITING ROOM

In the 16th century, the hot medical treatment was Bezoar stones - hard secretions formed in cow stomachs and goat gallbladders. The stones, it was widely believed, contained magical medical properties.

One skeptic was Ambroise Pare, a French barber/surgeon who argued that the stones were completely useless.

Pare persuaded authorities to do an experiment. A thief was offered a choice: be executed by public strangulation or swallow a lethal poison along with a Bezoar stone thought to be the perfect antidote.

The thief chose the latter and promptly died. The experiment, however, changed few minds. King Charles IX

concluded the thief's Bezoar stone was a fake.

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