

by Scott LaFee

MEDTRONICAwww.Pain.comA wide-ranging site devoted to the subject of pain, intended for both consumers and professionals. There's an "Ask the Pain Doctor" section, regularly updated news and a library on pain resources.

A WRINKLY SMILE IN TIMEBack in 1965, when he was 20 years old, rock star Pete Townshend penned the line: "I hope I die before I get old" in the song, "My Generation."

A WRINKLY SMILE IN TIME - Researchers say young people tend to 'mispredict' their happiness in old age, and old people tend to 'misremember' how happy they were in their youth. CNS PhotoTownshend's now 61 and probably in no hurry to die, but his words reflect a commonly held sentiment: Most people believe their happiest days are in their youth, and that old age is a drag.And they're wrong, say researchers at the University of Michigan and VA Ann Arbor Healthcare System, who found that young people tend to "mispredict" their happiness in old age, and old people tend to "misremember" how happy they were in their youth.

Researchers surveyed 540 adults between the ages of 21 and 40 and older than 60. They were asked to rate or predict their individual level of happiness at their current age, at age 30, and at age 70, and to judge how happy most people are at these ages.

"Overall, people got it wrong, believing that most people become less happy as they age, when in fact this study and others have shown that people tend to become happier over time," said Heather Lacey, one of the study's authors.

"Not only do younger people believe that older people are less happy, but older people believe they and others must have been happier 'back then,'" Lacey said. "Neither belief is accurate."

Lacey and colleagues say that most people mistakenly believe that happiness is simply a matter of circumstance, that happiness or misery are the result of stuff happening, whether it's winning the lottery or becoming disabled by disease.

But Dr. Peter Ubel, another study author, said happiness is more the result of underlying emotional resources that grow with time. "People get better at managing life's ups and downs, and the result is that as they age, they become happier - even though their objective circumstances, such as their health, decline."

BODY OF KNOWLEDGE Human tears are approximately 0.9 percent salt, about one-third as salty as seawater.

GET ME THAT. STAT! More than 4.5 million American lives are saved each year by blood transfusions, according to the American Red Cross. An estimated 5 percent of eligible Americans donate blood annually. Every two seconds, an American requires a transfusion.

PHOBIA OF THE WEEK Homichlophobia - a fear of fog

BEST MEDICINE "Is it true Anna's son is seeing a psychiatrist?" a woman asked her friend. "That's what I heard," the friend replied. "What's the problem?" "The psychiatrist says the boy has a profound Oedipus complex." "Oedipus-schmoedipus," scoffed the first woman. "As long as he loves his mother."

STORIES FOR THE WAITING ROOM Minoxidil (Rogaine) and finasteride (Propecia) are merely the latest purported remedies for hair loss and baldness. In 1550 B.C., the Egyptians concocted a tonic that, according to surviving manuscripts, called for a mixture of lion, hippo, crocodile, cat, serpent and ibex fat to be applied liberally to the barren scalp.

What connection crocodiles and serpents had with hair is unclear.

OBSERVATIONOne out of four people is mentally unbalanced. Think of your three closest friends. If they seem OK, then you're the one.- Ann Landers

FIXING FAMOUS PEOPLEAll of the following have had Botox treatments, according to Mitchell Symons, author of "This Book of More Perfectly Useless Information." A partial list, to be sure: Madonna, Cliff Richard, Patsy Kensit, Joan Rivers, Elizabeth Hurley, Celine Dion, Kirstie Alley, Tom Cruise and Jamie Lee Curtis.

Copley News Service