INDICATIONS

H1N1: The Bacteria Edition

Physicians who oppose H1N1 vaccination are in the minority, but their position is supported by an unlikely ally—bacteria, said Prof. Eshel Ben-Jacob, a physicist at Tel Aviv University. "Unlike our health authorities, bacteria would never panic. Bacteria don't follow the media or watch cable news. … And based on what we've seen in bacterial colonies, I know they would be suspicious committing to swine flu shots," he said in a statement released by the American Friends of Tel Aviv University. In a recent study, Prof. Ben-Jacob and his associates explored the decision-making processes of bacteria (Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA 2009;106:21027-34). Bacteria have been around a long time—about 4 billion years longer than humans. Prof. Ben-Jacob said they "don't take risks like we do, and the results have paid off. They are supersuccessful, more than any creature on Earth. They wouldn't abuse the stock market and would never invest beyond their means. I am also pretty sure most would not rush to get the flu shot."

Duh-partment of the Obvious

Some questions may never be answered, but researchers at James Cook University in Townsville, Australia, have put a few minds at ease by uncovering the least painful way to remove a Band-Aid. The 65 subjects rated the pain of quick removal at 0.92 on a 1-11 scale, compared with 1.58 for slow removal (Med. J. Aust. 2009;191:682-3). Scores were higher in those with more body hair, according to www.dailytelegraph.com.au. The investigators are now gearing up to answer their next great question: How many licks does it take to get to the center of a Tootsie Pop?

'Twas the Day After Christmas

This press release is intended for physicians and analysts/investors. Please note that this release may not have been issued in every market in which santaCLAUS Inc. operates.

NORTH POLE — A majority of "Americans" believe that Santa Claus™ is an overall positive influence on children, according to new survey findings.

In his analysis "Santa Claus: A Public Health Pariah" (BMJ 2009;339:b5261), Dr. Nathan Grills said that the current image of Santa Claus promotes obesity, drinking and driving, speeding, and a general unhealthy lifestyle. Dr. Grills of Monash University in Melbourne, Australia, suggested that Santa should slim down, stop eating all the goodies people leave for him, and swap his reindeer for a bike.

"It is clear that the santaCLAUS brand's reputation for diversity and generosity outweighs the suboptimal aspects of Santa's character," said Butterscotch, the CEO elf. "Let's see Dr. Grills travel around the world in one night on a bicycle."

About the Survey

This survey was conducted by Maynard, the accounting elf, among a representative sample of 87 "Americans" (elves who had traveled to the United States, its territories, or possessions). Interviewing was completed during the elves' coffee break on Jan. 5.

—Richard Franki

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