



POLICY & PRACTICE

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Neurologist Is a 'Genius'

A California neurologist has won a MacArthur Award for his work on frontotemporal dementia. Dr. William Seeley, a clinician-researcher at the University of California, San Francisco, and his team studied von Economo neurons and mapped changes in cortical networks corresponding to clinical subtypes of the disorder. "Seeley's observations represent a key step toward identifying the molecular and cellular mechanisms underlying the initiation and spread of frontotemporal dementia and lay the groundwork for developing targeted treatments to halt its progression," according to the foundation's statement, which notes that the disorder is second only to Alzheimer's disease as the main cause of progressive presenile dementia.

More Youth Brain Injuries

The number of visits to emergency departments by children and young adults

with traumatic brain injuries increased 62% between 2001 and 2009, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. That's a rise from 153,375 to 248,418 in people 19 years or younger. The agency attributed the increase to heightened awareness of concussions and other brain injuries. But the number of resulting hospitalizations did not change. Nearly 70% of the ED visits were among youth aged 10-19 years. The most common causes of the injuries among boys were football and bicycling. Soccer, bicycling, and basketball were the most common activities causing the injuries among girls. During the period, 6.5% of the total of 2,651,581 youth ED visits for sports and recreation injuries were traumatic brain injuries, the CDC estimated.

YouTube Carries Misinformation

Most popular YouTube videos about movement disorders such as Parkinson's

disease and dystonias depict people who don't have a movement disorder, according to an analysis of 29 videos by seven neurologists. Many times, the origin of a depicted disorder was instead psychogenic, they said. More alarming to the reviewers was that the videos contained dubious advice about therapies, such as that dystonia could be relieved by wearing cotton clothes and avoiding radiation. "Physicians should caution their patients to be wary of relying on information from potentially unreliable Web sources, and should also help to make reliable medical information freely available to those with either organic or psychogenic disorders," the authors wrote in a letter to the editor in the New England Journal of Medicine. They added that their review "highlights an underlying problem that affects virtually every medical specialty."

Device Approved for ALS Patients

The Food and Drug Administration has approved an implantable device (NeuRx, Synapse Biomedical Inc.) for amyotrophic lateral sclerosis patients with chronic hypoventilation. The device stimulates the diaphragm with electrical

impulses. "The availability of the NeuRx DPS device to appropriate ALS patients is a major advance in the treatment of the disease that will enhance survival and quality of life," Dr. Rup Tandan of the University of Vermont's ALS Certified Center, said in a statement. About 1 in 10 of the 30,000 ALS patients in this country have both respiratory problems and intact phrenic nerves that could be stimulated, according to the ALS Association.

—Naseem S. Miller

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