Minerva

In the UK, rates of registration as a kidney donor are low in ethnic minorities, even though people of African, black Caribbean, and South Asian heritage are several times more likely to need a kidney transplant than white people. A questionnaire survey finds that this can't be explained by specific cultural or religious barriers. Negative attitudes to organ donation arose from worries that the organs might be used for research, a lack of confidence that medical teams would try as hard to save the life of a donor, concerns about leaving the body intact after death, and questioning the value of being a donor (*Journal of Public Health* 2006;28:226-34 doi: 10.1093/pubmed/fdl045).

The European Doctors Orchestra will be performing their third UK concert at 3 pm on Sunday 26 November at the Royal Academy of Music in London, in aid of Save the Children. The menu includes a raucous romp through Beethoven's Leonora overture No 3, and Sibelius' third symphony, as well as a brand new trombone concerto by Michael Brooks, a member of the orchestra. For tickets please call 020 7873 7300 or email box.office@ram.ac.uk. Last year's concert was a sell out.

The announcement of Kylie Minogue's breast cancer had an interesting effect on referrals to one rapid access breast clinic in the UK. Complex mathematical modelling used to forecast data showed that referrals and radiographic investigations increased significantly, with no increase in the number of malignant diagnoses (*Breast* 2006;15: 667-9 doi: 10.1016/j.breast.2006.03.006). Minerva wonders whether Kylie influenced the referring doctors as much as their patients.

Selenium is promoted as a protection against heart disease, but there's no real evidence for recommending it. The results from observational studies are difficult to interpret, and they may not be valid because such studies have proved misleading for other antioxidants. The jury is definitely still out when it comes to randomised trials, because few have been completed, and the findings from those small trials that have been done cannot rule out beneficial or harmful cardiovascular effects (*American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* 2006;84:762-73 www.ajcn.org).

"Frequent flyers" is a phrase used to describe frail, and mainly older, people who come in and out of hospital on a regular basis. But according to Harry Cayton, the national director for patients and the public, it's a

A 35 year old African man was diagnosed as having HIV infection in 2001 after he developed pulmonary tuberculosis. Having taken antiretrovirals for about five years, he reported lumps on his lower lip. The histology was consistent with verrucous (viral) warts. Oral warts can occur after initiation of HAART (highly active antiretroviral therapy) but they are not related to the degree of immune suppression. The underlying pathogenesis is unclear but is probably related to immune reconstitution. Oral warts respond well to cryotherapy but occasionally require surgical removal.

Ranjan Laskar, honorary clinical observer (ronlaskar@rediffmail.com), Prabhat Sood, consultant, department of genitourinary medicine, Guest Hospital, Dudley DY1 4SE

Guidance at bmj.com/advice

poor and alienating term. He says it implies that these people want regular trips to hospital, that they are collecting points, and that they "enjoy the health and life threatening roundabout" of continual admission, treatment, and discharge. The term suggests choice. In reality, he says, frequent flyers are a sign of our failure (*Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine* 2006;99:484 www.jrsm.org).

Nerve blocks in fingers and toes are challenging to administer and take longer than infiltration of anaesthetic into tissue to take effect, but they achieve a more extensive area of anaesthesia and potentially reduce the volume of local anaesthetic needed. A randomised controlled trial of digital and local infiltration for finger lacerations compared with topical application of a local anaesthetic mixture to all wounds, reports that with both methods the experience of pain is similar (*Academic Emergency Medicine* 2006;13:1046-50 doi: 10.1197/j.aem.2006.06.048).

An American home mentoring programme for low income, black, adolescent mothers designed to delay second births proved remarkably effective. Its success at targeting personal development, including negotiating skills, was seen after just two visits, and improved over time. But there was little evidence that risky behaviour or poor contraceptive use was related to rapid second

births, and in fact there was some evidence that adolescent mothers regard rapid second births as desirable, helping them gain greater autonomy and form a family (*Pediatrics* 2006;118:e1087-99 doi: 10.1542/peds.2005-2318).

There's a lot of anti-fat rhetoric flying around these days, and most of it's wrapped up in the fear of problems that obesity brings to health and wellbeing. But the fat camp can start to strike back. A 10-18 year follow-up of patients who have undergone total hip replacement found that clinical and radiological outcomes or complications in obese patients were not significantly different from those in non-obese patients—nor were surgical revision rates different (*Journal of Bone and Joint Surgery* 2006;88-B:1268-92 doi: 10.1302/0301-620X.88B10.17660).

Another condition often assumed to influence the outcome of surgery is diabetes. But a risk adjusted analysis of diabetic patients undergoing cardiac surgery reports that diabetic patients can be surgically revascularised with an immediate and medium term level of morbidity and mortality comparable with control patients. The adverse effect of diabetes in the longer term obviously remains a problem (*Journal of Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgery* 2006;132:802-10 doi: 10.1016/j.jtcvs.2006.05.056).