

MENTORING MINUTES

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ALCOHOLIC PARENTS INCREASE RISK

Alcoholic parents put their children at increased risk of early drinking behaviour, and now a study in *Psychology of Addictive Behaviours* shows that parental alcoholism is also a risk factor for illicit drug use. The study followed 545 adolescents over a period of 15 years to monitor their use of drugs, looking for differences in drug experimentation and ongoing use between children of alcoholics and children of non-alcoholics.

The children of alcoholics maintained consistent levels of drug use, so that they were using substantially more than the children of non-alcoholics by ages 25-30. Young adults were found to mature over time and reduce their drug use by age 30, but not if they had an alcoholic parent. Researchers also found that marriage was associated

with lower levels of drug use in both groups, but children of alcoholics were less likely to be married.

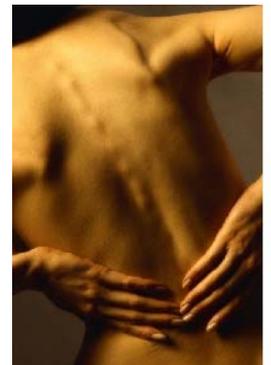


BACK PAIN RELIEF

Back pain sufferers could now be prescribed a heat pack with their medication, as a study in the *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine* shows that continuous low-level heat wrap therapy (CLHT) reduces lower back pain and improves performance at work compared to pain education alone. The study includes 43 patients aged 20-62 who visited a clinic for acute lower back pain. Patients were

randomly divided into two groups—18 patients received only education about back therapy and pain management, while 25 received the education plus three consecutive days of CLHT for eight hours at a time. Within one day of treatment with the heat pack—worn under the clothing over the lower back—patients on CLHT showed a 52 per cent reduction in pain

intensity and a 43 per cent improvement in pain relief



COLD TURKEY FOR SMOKERS

Smokers who quit on the spot are more likely to kick the habit than those who plan ahead, says a new study in the *British Medicine Journal*. Over 1,900 smokers and ex-smokers were interviewed about their attempts to

tempt was planned in advance, whether attempts made at least six months before had results in at least six months without smoking. Almost half the smokers reported that their most recent quit attempt was unplanned, with their decision to stop smoking going into effect immediately. In those

who tried to quiet between six months and five years previously, the odds of success were almost three times greater in unplanned compared to planned attempts. These differences remained after accounting for age, sex and socioeconomic groups.



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DEPRESSION TRIGGERS

Depression can be triggered by many factors, but it seems that genes contribute more strongly to the risk of major depression in woman than in men. Appearing in this week's issue of the American Journal of Psychiatry, researchers

report that the heritability of depression—the contribution of genetic factors—is 42% in women and only 29% in men. The research team studies 42,161 twins, including 15,493 complete pairs from the Swedish Twin

Registry, born between 1900 and 1958. They interviewed participants to assess lifetime major depression, and then analysed the contribution of genetic and environmental factors. The results suggested that some

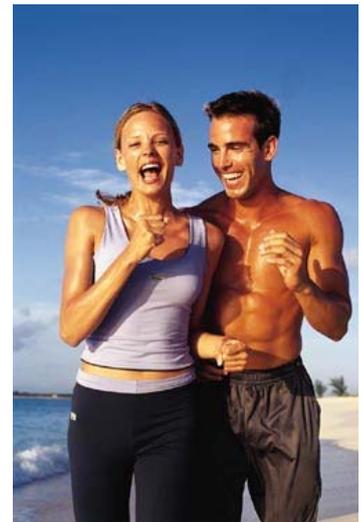
genetic risk factors from major depression might be sex-specific. Over six decades, there were no changes in the relative contribution of genetic and environmental risk factors for major depression.

FISH OIL REDUCES EXERCISE-INDUCED ASTHMA

Fish oil, containing omega-3 fatty acids, has been found to have yet another health benefit. In the latest issue of Chest, scientists report that a diet supplemented with fish oil can reduce the symptoms of exercise-induced asthma. Sixteen patients with mild to moderate asthma were randomly

assigned to a normal diet supplemented with either fish oil capsules or placebo for three weeks. Researchers measured participants lung function and airway inflammation both before and after exercise. Fish oil supplements improved post-exercise lung function by 64% and decreased the use of emergency

inhalers by 31% compared to placebo. The diet supplemented with fish oil also reduced inflammation in the lungs, which can cause breathing difficulties following exercise and discourage some asthmatics from participating in sport.



IN A QUANDARY ABOUT KERRY PACKER AND THE MEMORIAL SERVICE?

Phillip Adams was a mentor and a friend!

In describing his relationship Phil Adams said "It was just that Kerry was high maintenance and I got busier. He called me occasionally, wrote a thank you note for something, and became a billionaire.

My strongest memory remains the "black hole" con-

versation. I doubt that there was enough money in the world to fill it, but hope that his financial triumphs were more than hollow victories. And that there were times of happiness for that lonely man.

My regret for Packer is that he never used his great wealth for any great purpose. He leaves behind a business empire but little else. Hence

my opposition to the state memorial service. Australia did a lot for Kerry, but he didn't do much for Australia. He made billions out of two government licensed addictions—television and gambling (one of the world's most socially destructive businesses).

Kerry had his qualities. Great humour. Physical courage. A determination to treat his kids

better than Frank had treated him and Clyde. (The Packers were good parents—Jamie and Gretel are polite, delightful kids.) But there was hardly a sherrick of the Soros, Gates or Myer view of philanthropy. No Bond University. No Packer Foundation. We'll have to leave that to his family.

BOOKS TO READ

Freakonomics, S.D. Levitt and S. J. Dubner, Allan Lane (2005)

Who We Are (5 miscellany of the New Australia), David Dale, Allen Unwin 2006

Opening The Door To Your Heart, Ajaln Brahn Thomas Lottian (2004)

