

LEADING THE NEWS

Some forms of hormonal birth control tied to increased breast cancer risk

NBC News (3/21, Bendix) reports a new study has found that “the relative risk of being diagnosed with breast cancer was 20% to 30% higher among women who use or recently used birth control pills with a two-hormone combination, progestogen-only pills or hormonal IUDs compared to women who did not.” The [findings](#) were published in PLOS Medicine.

STAT (3/21, Chen, Subscription Publication) reports that an “exception may be for people who already have an elevated risk of breast cancer due to certain pathogenic mutations or a family history of breast cancer.” In “these individuals, a 20% to 30% increase in cancer risk may translate to higher absolute odds of getting breast cancer, although” researchers “cautioned that there’s less research done specifically on groups of women with high-risk mutations and hormonal contraceptives.”

From the

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PUBLIC HEALTH

Inability to walk and talk at the same time may be harbinger of dementia

HealthDay (3/21, Reinberg) reports, “Problems walking and talking or thinking at the same time might be a warning sign of impending dementia,” investigators concluded after collecting and then analyzing “data on nearly 1,000 people in Spain who took part in the Barcelona Brain Health Initiative between May 2018 and July 2020.” More than 600 of these people “were evaluated for their ability to walk and think at the same time.” The study also revealed that the ability to “juggle two tasks simultaneously” begins “to fall off in middle-age.” The [findings](#) were published online in The Lancet Healthy Longevity.

Maternal BMI, fat mass appear associated with BMI, fat mass of daughters aged six to nine years

Healio (3/21, Monostra) reports, “Maternal BMI and fat mass are positively associated with the BMI and fat mass of daughters aged six to nine years,” investigators concluded after studying data from “the Southampton Women’s Survey” that “included 3,158 women aged 20 to 34 years who had a liveborn infant.” The study found “only an association in lean mass...between fathers and daughters,” however, but “no associations...between maternal or paternal body composition measurements and those measured in sons.” The [findings](#) were published online in the Journal of Clinical Endocrinology & Metabolism.

Greater social support for older adults with depression may help boost verbal functioning

MedPage Today (3/21, Monaco) reports, “Greater social support for older adults with depression helped boost verbal functioning, researchers” concluded. In the “cross-sectional study” involving “54 participants with an average age of 72,” researchers found that “seniors with major depressive disorder tended to score higher on phonemic fluency – measured by Controlled Oral Word Association Test...-- when they had higher levels of perceived social support.” What’s more, “this association went both ways,” the study revealed. The [findings](#) were published online March 21 in a research letter in JAMA Network Open.

Approximately a third of lupus hospitalizations lack post-discharge follow-up care

Healio (3/21, Martin) reports, “Approximately one-third of lupus hospitalizations lack post-discharge follow-up care, with ‘significant disparities’ reported among rural and disadvantaged localities,” researchers concluded after conducting “an observational cohort study of a 20% random sample of adults on Medicare.” The [findings](#) were published online in the journal Arthritis Care & Research.

Tofacitinib may reduce interstitial lung disease in patients with RA

MedPage Today (3/21, Short) reports, “Tofacitinib (Xeljanz) in patients with rheumatoid arthritis (RA) stood out among several other biologic and targeted synthetic disease-modifying antirheumatic drugs (sDMARDs) when it came to the incidence of interstitial lung disease (ILD),” investigators concluded in “a retrospective cohort study” that included “over 28,000 patients with RA.” The [findings](#) were published online in JAMA Network Open.

Hydrocortisone treatment may lower mortality risk in patients with severe pneumonia

MedPage Today (3/21, Hein) reports, “For patients admitted to the intensive care unit with severe community-acquired pneumonia, treatment with hydrocortisone led to a lower risk of death at 28 days versus placebo, a phase 3 randomized trial in France showed.” The [findings](#) were published in the New England Journal of Medicine.

Early administration of 4F-PCC was not beneficial to patients with at risk of massive transfusion

MedPage Today (3/21, Short) reports, “Early administration of 4-factor prothrombin complex concentrate (4F-PCC) was of no benefit to patients with trauma at risk of massive transfusion, the randomized PROCOAG trial from France showed.” Investigators found that “among over 300 patients with the highest trauma level activation, the absolute difference in median total 24-hour blood product consumption between the 4F-PCC and placebo groups was 0.2 U.” Additionally, “35% of patients in the 4F-PCC group presented with at least one thromboembolic event compared with 24% of the placebo group.” The [findings](#) were published in JAMA.

PHARMA & DEVICE UPDATE

FDA close to deciding on second dose of Omicron-tailored boosters in high-risk people

Reuters (3/21, Leo, Mahobe) reports that the FDA “is close to making a decision on authorization of a second dose of updated COVID-19 vaccine boosters for high-risk people, the Wall Street Journal reported on Tuesday, citing sources.” The agency “could make the decision within a few weeks, the WSJ said, adding the regulator is considering authorizing second jabs of Omicron-targeted shots for people who are 65 years and older or those who have weakened immune systems, although officials are yet to reach a final decision.”

HEALTH COVERAGE AND ACCESS

Higher health costs expected following revamped guidance on settling billing disputes

Bloomberg Law (3/21, Hansard, Subscription Publication) reports, “Health insurers, employers, and consumers could see higher costs in the wake of” guidance from the departments of HHS, Labor, and Treasury “on settling payment disputes for emergency and out-of-network care, an official with a consumer group said.” The departments’ “new guidance instructs arbitrators to consider the ‘qualifying payment amount,’ or median contract network rates, along with other factors listed in the No Surprises Act, such as the level of training of a provider or how severe a patient’s condition is.” The guidance “also allows both providers and health plans to submit any other information they think is relevant in deciding payment rates.”

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Most privately insured patients utilized some preventive care services in ACA, analysis indicates

HealthPayerIntelligence (3/21, Rodriguez) reports, “Researchers from the Peterson-Kaiser Family Foundation Health System Tracker discovered” in an [analysis](#) “that in 2018, nearly 100 million privately insured Americans, or 6 out of 10, utilized

some of the preventive care mandated as part of the Affordable Care Act.” This “analysis examined the share of privately insured people who received ACA preventive care and utilized services or medication in 2018, using two claims databases to assess utilization: the Merative MarketScan Commercial Claims and Encounters dataset for large group enrollees and the Enrollee-Level External Data Gathering Environment Limited Data Set for individual and small group market enrollees.”

PRACTICE MANAGEMENT

Use of front-end speech recognition increasing for clinical documentation

EHR Intelligence (3/21, Nelson) says, “The health care market is moving towards front-end speech recognition as the go-to clinical documentation platform,” according to a [report](#) from KLAS. In this report, “interviewed organizations said that ambient speech recognition technology has improved over the last few years in terms of accuracy and ability to detect accents to the point that it is on par with the precision of transcription services.”

TUESDAY’S LEAD STORIES

- [Candida auris spreading at “alarming rate” in health facilities, CDC says](#)
- [Report: Over half of world population projected to be overweight or obese by 2035](#)
- [Biden signs legislation to declassify information about COVID-19 origins into law](#)

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