Downloaded from bjo.bmj.com on February 13, 2012 - Published by group.bmj.com

From the Library

''The earlier ones had been highly figurative; over time, however, the drawings followed de Koonig's evolution away from his academic training and toward a somewhat more geometric way of rendering the shapes of the body. Years later, Juliet described how he worked during this period as he tried to puzzle out the figure. He would take a long time to finish a drawing. He would think a lot. It took him more than a week to draw my eyes. He wanted to draw them in the style of Leonardo, showing the outside of the eye as the inside. The part above the eye he wanted to draw without the skin around it. I remember him drawing on his knees.'' (Stevens M, Swan A. *de Kooning. An American Master*. New York: Alfred A Knopf, 2004:151–2)

In seeking to explain the emergence of the remarkable art of the Renaissance the celebrated contemporary artist David Hockney came up with a bold and controversial theory. He suggested that Renaissance paintings looked realistic—possessing what he called the ''optical look'' because artists used lenses and mirrors to project images on the canvasses or similar surfaces and then trace or paint over the results. However, scientific analyses of these paintings, including the use of computer vision techniques and infrared reflectography, raise serious questions about this theory. Christopher Tyler of the Smith Kettlewell Eye Research Institute in San Francisco has suggested an alternative reason for the rise in realism during this period. He suggests the growing prevalence of spectacle use by artists simply made the world clearer. (Stork BG. Optics and realism in Renaissance art. *Scientific American* 2004;**2291**:76–83)

The Ocular Hypertension Treatment Study is a multicentred randomised clinical trial to evaluate the safety and efficacy of topical ocular hypotensive medication in delaying or preventing the onset of visual field loss and/or optic nerve damage in ocular hypertensive individuals at moderate risk for developing primary open angle glaucoma. Part of this study has investigated the relation of central corneal thickness (CCT) and measured intraocular pressure (IOP). In a study of 689 patients CCT was found to be inversely related to the IOP response. The mean CCT was not correlated with a number of different medications prescribed during follow up, the total medication months, or the percentage of visits at which the IOP target was met. The authors conclude that individuals with thicker corneas have smaller measured IOP responses to comparable ocular hypotensive medications than those with normal or thin corneas. They suggest that CCT measurements may be useful in patient management and interpreting response of ocular hypotensive medications. (*Am J Ophthalmol* 2004;**138**:717–31)

The success of topical therapy in ophthalmology is well known. However, the use of immunomodulatory agents in ophthalmology it is by and large by the systemic route. Although topical corticosteroids are effective a wide range of other immunomodulatory agents have been tested including cyclosporin A, mycophenolate mofetil, tacrolimus, rapamycin, and leflunomide. Because many of these other immunomodulator agents are lipophilic and thus have low water solubility and penetrate the eye poorly they end up being concentrated in the lipophilic corneal epithelial barrier. New strategies have been introduced, however, to circumvent these problems, including complex substances such as cyclodextrins and liposomes. While most studies to date have involved experimental animals with uveitis or post keratoplasty, early clinical studies have shown a benefit of topical therapy in diseases such as dry eye, vernal keratoconjunctivitis, and atopic blepharocongjunctivitis. Further advances in this field would be welcome. (*Ophthalmologica* 2004;**218**:359–67)

Why do we find music so moving? The scientific basis for this is incompletely understood. However, findings to date indicate that music has a biological basis and the brain has a functional organisation for music. Even at an early stage of investigation many brain regions participate in specific aspects of music processing. Musicians appear to have additional specialisations, particularly hyper-development of some brain structures. These effects demonstrate that learning retunes the brain, increasing both the response of individual cells and the number of cells that react strongly to sounds that become important to an individual. As research on music in the brain continues we can anticipate a greater understanding not only about music and its reasons for existence but how the brain processes it in a multifaceted way. (*Scientific American* 2004;**291**:989–95)

Prostatic cancer strikes one in six men on average. In Toronto, investigators have presented data to suggest that a relatively common variant of a gene involved in cell growth can raise the risk of prostatic cancer. Researchers in New York City have found a mutated version of the gene Kruppel-like factor 6 (KLF6) in many prostatic tumours. The mutation apparently disrupts the normal role of KLF6 in inhibiting cell growth. About 17% of patients with a family history of prostatic cancer carry the altered gene and 15% of patients with no such history carry at least one copy of the variant. Only 11% of the controls possessed a copy. Variations in at least three other genes have been identified as raising a man's prostatic cancer risk. Clearly, the puzzle of the genetic influences on prostatic cancer needs further clarification. (*Science* 2004;**306**:1285)

Cortical visual impairment remains the most common cause of visual loss in children in developed countries. Now in an attempt to treat children with central nervous system damage two randomised clinical trials of either systemic cooling or selective head cooling in encephalopathy of neonates suggests that moderate hypothermia is safe in these infants. Moreover, in at least one study newborns with moderate encephalopathy had better neural development outcomes at 18 months than did newborns who were untreated. Studies in laboratory animals have shown that the immature brain responds differently to treatment that does the mature brain. Therapy designed to ameliorate brain injury in adults may actually worsen outcome in neonates. However, there are drugs that have been shown to be effective in preventing brain injury in animal models of encephalopathy. These include allopurinol, deferoxamine, and 3-iminobiotin. The neuroprotective effect of exogenously administered erythropoietin has received much attention and there are promising data emerging from clinical trials in newborns. (*N Engl J Med* 2004;**351**:1985–95)

Downloaded from bjo.bmj.com on February 13, 2012 - Published by group.bmj.com

From the Library

Br J Ophthalmol 2005 89: 252
doi: 10.1136/bjo.2004.feb05ftl

Updated information and services can be found at:
http://bjo.bmj.com/content/89/2/252.full.html

These include:

References This article cites 6 articles, 1 of which can be accessed free at:
http://bjo.bmj.com/content/89/2/252.full.html#ref-list-1

Email alerting service Receive free email alerts when new articles cite this article. Sign up in the box at the top right corner of the online article.

Notes

To request permissions go to:
http://group.bmj.com/group/rights-licensing/permissions

To order reprints go to:
http://journals.bmj.com/cgi/reprintform

To subscribe to BMJ go to:
http://group.bmj.com/subscribe/