



## LIFE CAN SOMETIMES BE A REAL PAIN IN THE A - -

Aman came to the emergency room at St. Paul's Hospital in Vancouver complaining of pain in his rectum. A gastroenterologist found a vial of urine the patient had stashed in his rectum in preparation for a urine test for methadone. If the test were negative he would be given the privilege of "take home" methadone that he would either take or sell on the street. He feared the possible loss of privilege if the specimen did not test at body temperature. Tough luck, dude! You should have stored it in your armpit.

## THIS CASE IS CLOSELY FOLLOWED BY POT HOLDERS.

Brandon Coats, of Littleton, Colorado, was paralyzed from the chest down from an auto accident injury. He obtained a license for medical marijuana after his doctor recommended he try it in combination with other drugs to control muscle spasms. According to Coats it is the only solution he has found. He got a job answering phone calls for Dish Network where he was employed for three years. Then, because he tested positive for marijuana, a violation of company policy, he was fired. He stated he never used or possessed marijuana at work. The state Supreme Court heard arguments in a lawsuit brought by Coats. Medical use of marijuana was approved in Colorado in 2000 and recreational pot was legalized in 2010. The plaintiff attorney said, "We are not arguing it is a constitutional right, but we are arguing that it's lawful." But the real issue should be whether medical necessity trumps an employer's requirement for a drug free workplace.

## THE DISCUSSION IS ABOUT OVA, NOT EMBRYOS.

After seven years of scientific study, ethical debate and public debate, lawmakers in the United Kingdom voted to allow a revolutionary procedure called mitochondrial replacement therapy (MRT). It allows for removal of defective DNA from a woman's ovum to be replaced by DNA from a healthy donor. It could help hundreds of parents in the United States, and thousands around the world. Every year hundreds of children in the United States are born with genetic mutations that cause suffering and sometimes death. MRT opponents include some religious and feminist groups who argue that the procedure is genetic engineering. They portray MRT as producing children that would have "three parents." That is a bit of an exaggeration as the offspring would have 99.99% of their DNA from their two parents with less than 0.01% from the woman who provided the healthy mitochondria. A more accurate analogy might be really small organ transplant. Last February 2014 the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) held hearings and elected to delay trials of this therapy until more research is done. Many physicians, scientists and patients unsuccessfully opposed the FDA's non-action. Given the United Kingdom, decision should be revisited.

## WEEP SOME MORE, MY LADY. YOU TOO, GUYS.

According to the National Eye Institute, dry eyes likely afflict more than 12 million Americans. Researchers suggest reduced tear secretion may be caused by imbalance in the autonomic nervous system, made up of the sympathetic and parasympathetic nerve pathways. The sympathetic system regulates heart rate and blood pressure while the parasympathetic controls rest and relaxation responses. Tears are linked to the parasympathetic nerves that control the lacrimal (tear) glands and tear secretion. Researchers found slow, deep breathing may help to restore autonomic control, improving the flow of tears. The technique involves slowly inhaling through the nose, causing the abdomen to rise instead of the chest. After a brief pause, air is exhaled through the mouth. The Japanese research team found that tear volume increased approximately 48% within 15 minutes of the abdominal breathing session compared with pre-breathing volume. The long-term effects of abdominal breathing on tear flow aren't known.

## PREVIOUSLY THE GOVERNOR WAS INDECISIVE. NOW HE'S NOT SO SURE.

One might assume that an educated person would know, but apparently not always. The battle against vaccinations goes back to the first immunization for smallpox in 1796. Edward Jenner, a brilliant country doctor in England, observed that many milkmaids did not get small pox. He proved to the medical world that inoculation with cowpox would prevent the dreaded infection of smallpox, a deadly epidemic disease that ravaged civilization. He was both praised and vilified before his work was ultimately accepted. In the last 100 years more and more diseases have come under control, polio, diphtheria, pertussis, measles, rubella, tetanus, all through the process of vaccination. It is strange to see politicians who dream of the White House, namely Republican Governors Christie and Walker, dancing around the issue. Using phrases like "parental choice," they failed to endorse vaccines. Meantime President Obama said of course he believes in vaccinations. "The science is irrefutable." Apparently, the pussy-footing around vaccinations is related to the autism issue that was thoroughly debunked by multiple studies.

## ONE SIZE DOES NOT FIT ALL.

Overlooked in all the media attention to Obamacare, is the introduction of EHRs, electronic health records. Inspired by the efficiencies of integrated health care systems such as Kaiser and Veteran's Administration, designers of the ACA inserted the mandate for EHRs beginning this year. Planners ignored the possibility that what works for Kaiser might not work for Dr. Jones, and that is exactly what is happening today. Medical Economics magazine found that 67% of physicians are dissatisfied with EHRs. Three of four doctors said they do not save time. They reported having to spend (waste) an average of 48 minutes a day dealing with a template of items to demonstrate "meaningful use." This rigidity inhibits the doctor's ability to tailor questions to the patient's actual needs. Patients complain that the doctor no longer makes eye contact, but stares at a computer screen. EHRs do not increase efficiency, do not decrease record keeping errors, they reduce patient volume, they inhibit bedside manner, and they bring a major cash outlay for programs and devices to fulfill the mandate. Congress should make ending the EHR a plank in their party's agenda. No matter how you measure it, for the private practitioner EHRs are bad news. It causes one to wonder if it isn't part of a devious scheme to eliminate the private practitioner.

## ADDENDA

- The first tennis balls were stuffed with human hair.
- The official definition of a "jiffy" is 1/100th of a second.
- Chief, the United States Cavalry's last horse died in 1968. He was 36 years old.
- Microsoft wants to create a driving computer. Now when some goofball cuts you off you go to the screen, bring up dashboard, then horn and press twice. So much simpler than going beep, beep.
- How come you never see a serial killer with a light up bow tie?
- Phyllis Diller said, "Women want men, careers, money, children, friends, luxury, comfort, independence, freedom, respect, love, and three dollar pantyhose that won't run."
- What this country needs is a lot less of all sorts of things.
- Do you know how Columbus discovered America? He was drawn by bright lights from the Indian casinos.

## ALOHA AND KEEP THE FAITH *rts*

*(Editorial comment is strictly that of the writer.)*