Top news stories from AMA Morning Rounds®: Week of Dec. 30, 2019


Single dose of HPV vaccine may be as effective as two or three doses for preventing infection in women, study suggests

CNN (12/27, Howard) reported that a study suggests “A single dose of the human papillomavirus, or HPV, vaccine may be just as effective as two or three doses at preventing cancer-causing HPV infection.” The researchers “found that 111 of the 1,004 unvaccinated women” in the study “were diagnosed with infections of HPV types 6, 11, 16 or 18 between 2009 and 2016.” Meanwhile, “only four of the 106 women vaccinated with one dose; seven of the 126 women vaccinated with two doses; and 14 of the 384 women vaccinated with three doses were diagnosed with those infections during that time period.” The findings were published in JAMA Network Open.

Organic pollutants that persist for decades in the environment may affect fetal growth, study suggests

Reuters (12/30, Carroll) reports, “Pollutants that persist for decades in the environment may affect fetal growth,” research indicated, and “even when women had low blood levels of these pollutants, which include substances such as DDT and PCBs, babies’ growth in utero was impacted,” the study of 2,284 women revealed.

Newsweek (12/30, Gander) reports that for the study, investigators “looked for 76 chemicals from samples of maternal plasma from women in early pregnancy, and used ultrasound scans” to “measure how their fetuses grew, including head and abdominal circumferences.”

HealthDay (12/30, Thompson) reports that DDT and “other organic chemical pollutants” are “slow to break down and are still present in the food chain, said Dr. Rahul Gupta, chief medical and health officer for the March of Dimes.” More than 90% of exposure is through food. When looking at all the chemicals studied, the study authors found that in particular, “DDT and other organochlorine
pesticides were associated with the most dramatic growth delay.” The findings were published online in JAMA Pediatrics.

Administration expected to ban most flavors of e-cigarettes

The New York Times (12/31, A1, Kaplan, Haberman) reported that the administration is expected to ban all flavors of e-cigarette cartridges, or pods, except menthol and tobacco. However, the policy will not apply to “flavored liquid nicotine used in open tank systems,” which are popular in vape shops.

The Washington Post (12/31, McGinley, Dawsey) reports the ban is expected “to be announced later this week.” The article says that the expected policy “is a step back from the comprehensive flavor ban that President Trump announced in September to combat what has been described as an epidemic of underage vaping.”

The Wall Street Journal (12/31, Maloney, Burton, Subscription Publication) reported that the administration wants to take action to reduce teen vaping, but is also concerned that a more comprehensive ban would harm small businesses and result in political fallout.

CNN (12/31, Gumbrecht, Liptak) reports that last year, studies published in JAMA found that many high school students have vaped and that mint and fruit-flavored e-cigarettes are the most popular among young people.

Veterans’ chief concern in first year after military separation is their health, survey data indicate

Reuters (1/2, Steenhuyzen) reports, “Survey responses from nearly 10,000 U.S. veterans show their chief concern in the first year after leaving the service – beyond work or social relationships – is their health,” according to findings published online in the American Journal of Preventive Medicine. “Most” of the 9,566 veterans who responded to the survey “said they had chronic physical problems, and a third said they had chronic mental health problems.”

Pyrethroids may be associated with increased cardiovascular risks, researchers say

The New York Times (12/30, Bakalar) reports, “Pyrethroids, found in mosquito repellents, pet sprays and lice shampoos, may increase cardiovascular risks,” researchers concluded after testing

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“pyrethroid levels in urine samples from 2,116 adults selected from a large national health survey,” then following these people “for an average of 14 years.” After adjusting for confounding factors, investigators “found that compared with those in the lowest one-third for urine levels of pyrethroids, those in the highest had a 56 percent higher rate of all-cause death, and three times the rate of death from cardiovascular disease.”

HealthDay (12/30, Reinberg) reports that even though the study team “couldn’t say how people were exposed to pyrethroids, studies have shown that most exposure is from food, such as fruits and vegetables sprayed with the chemical.” In addition, “home use of pyrethroids in gardens and for pest-control is...a major source of exposure, the study authors noted.” Because “the use of pyrethroids has grown since the time of the study...the rate of deaths linked to it has likely also increased, the researchers said.” The findings were published online in JAMA Internal Medicine.

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