Top news stories from AMA Morning Rounds®: Week of May 30, 2022

Read AMA Morning Rounds®’ most popular stories in medicine and public health from the week of May 30, 2022–June 3, 2022.

Pediatric poisonings from melatonin rose by more than 500% from 2012 to 2021

The AP (6/2, Stobbe) reports, “Researchers are drawing attention to a rise in poisonings in children involving the sleep aid melatonin – including a big jump during the pandemic.” Data published in the CDC’s Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report revealed that “last year, U.S. poison control centers received more than 52,000 calls about children consuming worrisome amounts of the dietary supplement – a six-fold increase from about a decade earlier.”

MedPage Today (6/2, Walker) reports children ingesting melatonin “accounted for 4.9% of all pediatric ingestions reported to poison control centers in 2021, a 530% jump from 0.6% in 2012,” and “pediatric hospitalizations related to melatonin poisoning rose during the study period,” according to the data.

U.S. consumers overpaying billions for generic drugs due to business practices by PBMs

The Hill (6/1, Choi) reports U.S. “consumers are overpaying billions for generic drugs due to the cost being driven up by” pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs), according to a report by the University of Southern California. The report said, “Commercial tactics such as spread pricing, copay clawbacks and formularies that advantage branded drugs over less expensive generics have funneled the savings from low-cost generics into intermediaries’ pockets, rather than the pockets of patients.”

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Study: T2D tied to memory and thinking problems due to faster brain aging

HealthDay (5/31, Norton) reports, “Type 2 diabetes [T2D] is linked to memory and thinking problems...because the disease makes the brain age faster,” researchers concluded after examining “data from 20,000 middle-aged and older adults.” In addition, “MRI scans revealed” that “people with diabetes had more tissue shrinkage – akin to a 26% acceleration in normal brain aging.” The findings were published online in the journal eLife.

Moderate coffee consumption, with or without sugar, may be tied to reduced risk of death

Clinical Endocrinology News (5/31, Pass) reports, “Moderate consumption of coffee, with or without sugar, is associated with a reduced risk of death,” investigators concluded. The study revealed that “among more than 170,000 people in the United Kingdom, those who drank about two to four cups of coffee a day, with or without sugar, had a lower rate of death than those who didn’t drink coffee.” The findings were published online in the Annals of Internal Medicine.

Study: Daily e-cigarette users under 21 rose to over 1M by 2019

MedPage Today (5/30, Ruprecht) reports, “Each day between 2017 and 2019, nearly 2,300 adolescents and young adults became new daily tobacco users – a figure that mirrors statistics from 1989 to 1993,” according to results from a longitudinal study published in Pediatrics. The study found that “the total number of daily vape (or e-cigarette) users under 21 years of age rose to more than 1 million by 2019,” and “of those, 56.3% used Juul products in particular.”

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