Top news stories from AMA Morning Rounds®: Week of Aug. 15, 2022

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COVID-19 patients face increased risks of neurologic, psychiatric sequelae up to two years after infection

MedPage Today (8/17, George) reports, “Up to 2 years after infection, people who had COVID-19 continued to face increased risks of neurologic and psychiatric sequelae compared with people who had other respiratory infections, a retrospective study showed.” The “health records of nearly 1.3 million people...showed that risks of cognitive deficit (brain fog), dementia, psychotic disorders, and epilepsy or seizures were increased at 2 years for adults who had COVID, reported” researchers in The Lancet Psychiatry. Also, “children who had COVID...were more likely to be diagnosed with neurologic and psychiatric sequelae than their matched counterparts, but their likelihood of most diagnoses was lower than that of adults.”

FDA moves to make hearing aids available over the counter

The Washington Post (8/16, Scott, Shepherd) reports that on Tuesday, the FDA “moved to make hearing aids cheaper and easier to buy over the counter without a prescription or medical exam—a long-awaited goal for nearly 30 million consumers.” These new “regulations will create a new category of hearing aids that supersede state-level regulations requiring patients to visit physicians or audiologists to get prescriptions and fittings,” and “the devices will be available for individuals 18 and older with mild to moderate hearing loss at pharmacies, stores and online.”

U.S. officials shipping out more doses of monkeypox vaccine than originally planned


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The AP (8/15, Stobbe) reports “U.S. officials said they are able to ship out more monkeypox vaccine doses than previously planned—because of a strategy shift that allows more shots to be drawn from each vial.” HHS “had previously anticipated allowing 221,000 doses to be ordered starting Monday.” However, “officials said they would release 442,000 doses for order by state, local and territorial health departments.” The faster “release was only possible because U.S. health officials said last week that they would stretch the nation’s limited supply of Jynneos monkeypox vaccine by giving people one-fifth the usual dose, injected just under the skin.”

Reuters (8/15, Leo) reports HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra said, “FDA’s emergency use authorization of intradermal injection of the JYNNEOS vaccine is allowing us to get more doses to jurisdictions faster than anticipated and will help end this national monkeypox outbreak.”

**Drinking rainwater is unsafe due to growing presence of PFAS, study finds**

USA Today (8/13, Grantham-Philips) reported it is “now unsafe to drink rainwater around the world because of the growing presence of ‘forever chemicals,’ a new study suggests.” In the study, “researchers point to the dangers of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, or PFAS.” The study “found the levels of PFOA in drinking water in every part of the world, even some of the most remote areas, exceeded the EPA’s contamination guidelines,” which “means ‘rainwater everywhere would be judged unsafe to drink,’ Ian Cousins, lead author of the study and environmental science professor at Stockholm University, said.” The study was published in Environmental Science & Technology.