

EBC External Environmental Report

Week of 6 January

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"I couldn't have hoped for a better result,"

"It's exciting. It says the combination of an algorithm plus human intuition improves our ability to predict diagnosis."

Dr. Daniel A. Orringer, a neurosurgeon at NYU Langone Health, recently commented on a new approach for enhancing the diagnosis of brain tumors that involves AI.

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HORIZON EUROPE

Memo to London: 'No cherry picking' over Horizon Europe membership, R&D commissioner warns (*Science|Business*)

The European Union's top research official telegraphed a message to the UK's Brexit negotiators: When it comes to a post-Brexit deal on research cooperation, there can be "no cherry picking." In an interview with *Science|Business*, Mariya Gabriel, commissioner for innovation, research, culture, education and youth, said that the basic principles for UK entry into the EU's next big research programme would be the same as for other non-EU countries - and negotiations over research collaboration would have to be consistent with other parts of a post-Brexit trade deal.

ARTICLES OF INTEREST

Chinese Alzheimer's Drug to Launch Global Trials Amid Skepticism (*Bloomberg*)

A newly approved Chinese drug for Alzheimer's will start clinical trials in the U.S. and Europe next year as the country's first novel therapy for the incurable disease seeks global legitimacy. Shanghai Green Valley Pharmaceutical Co. plans to recruit around 2,046 patients with mild-to-moderate Alzheimer's for trials at 200 sites across North America, Europe and Asia Pacific for 18 months, the company's Vice President Li Jinhe said on Sunday.

A.I. Comes to the Operating Room (*The New York Times*)

Brain surgeons are bringing artificial intelligence and new imaging techniques into the operating room, to diagnose tumors as accurately as pathologists, and much faster, according to a report in the journal *Nature Medicine*. The new approach streamlines the standard practice of analyzing tissue samples while the patient is still on the operating table, to help guide brain surgery and later treatment.

Countries implementing about half of WHO recommendations (*Reuters*)

About half of the recommendations suggested by the World Health Organization to reduce chronic disease are put into practice, according to a new study. Implementation is slowly improving, yet alcohol and tobacco policies are the least widely practiced, researchers report in *The Lancet Global Health*. "It's a matter of holding countries accountable for their international commitments and speaking truth to power when they fail to take action," said Dr. Luke Allen of the University of Oxford in the United Kingdom, who led the research.

China is outflanking Japan in promoting research links with Germany (*Science|Business*)

China is outflanking Japan in building research cooperation with Germany because it sends its best students and scientists to study and work in the country, a leading voice in German research policy has told *Science|Business*. Top Chinese students scientists are joining "the best faculties" and they speak really good German, said Stefan Kaufman MP. It is not as easy to forge research ties with Japan. "You have to go there," Kaufman said, "I really think [Japan] should send more researchers and more students to Europe and to Germany." Kaufman is a member of chancellor Angela Merkel's CDU party, who for ten years served as research and education spokesman in the German federal parliament.

Japan looks to research moonshots to solve long-term structural problems (*Science|Business*)

Japanese government officials are being urged to think big as they plan multiple mission-oriented 'moonshot' research programmes to confront thorny domestic problems, with the government saying it will spend at least ¥100 billion (€824 million) over five years targeting difficult long-term challenges. "Japan is facing a lot of the biggest problems in the world before anyone else," Maurice Conti, CEO of the management consultants Applied Intelligence said during a meeting organised by the Japanese government in Tokyo last December, at which experts from around the world were invited to discuss the programme.

A Better Testing Method for Patients with Parkinson's Disease (*eHealthNews*)

Parkinson's disease is a neurodegenerative disorder that manifests through symptoms such as tremor, slow movements, limb rigidity and gait and balance problems. As such, nearly all diagnostic testing revolves around how a patient moves and requires the patient to walk for extensive distances and amounts of time. The discomfort caused to patients by this kind of testing is unacceptable, according to an international team of researchers based in Saudi Arabia and Sweden.

Mortality in children and adolescents following presentation to hospital after non-fatal self-harm in the Multicentre Study of Self-harm: a prospective observational cohort study (*The Lancet*)

Self-harm and suicide in children and adolescents are growing problems, and self-harm is associated with a significant risk of subsequent death, particularly suicide. Long-term follow-up studies are necessary to examine the extent and nature of this association.

Setbacks and Opportunities in Disease-Modifying Therapies in Alzheimer Disease (*JAMA Psychiatry*)

The Alzheimer community was recently confronted with sobering news: a phase III trial of aducanumab, an anti-amyloid compound that represented the most recent hope for a disease-modifying therapy (DMT), was discontinued when a futility analysis determined that no significant likelihood of therapeutic efficacy existed. This was a disheartening outcome, given promising phase Ib data that showed dose-dependent disease slowing and plaque clearance. Thus, the world is still facing an Alzheimer disease (AD) epidemic without any DMTs to combat the staggering financial and human costs.

Psychiatry's Obligation to Treat and Mitigate the Rising Burden of Age-Related Mental Disorders (*JAMA Psychiatry*)

Psychiatry has seen significant advances in our understanding of the neuroscience of development and the evolution of mental disorders in adolescents and younger adults. This allows us to educate our communities, combat stigma, identify individuals at high risk of developing mental disorders, and provide evidence-based interventions. These efforts are critical and may reduce chronicity and recurrence of mental disorders that contribute to accelerated biological aging and persistent disability.

Ramifications of the VA MISSION Act of 2018 on Mental Health ([*JAMA Psychiatry*](#))

US veterans face severe mental health needs; there have been more than 6000 suicides annually from 2008 to 2016, a 25.9% jump in suicides from 2005 to 2016, a suicide rate 1.5-fold higher than nonveterans, and higher suicide rates for veterans accessing Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) facilities vs those not using VA services, veterans overall, and nonveterans. On June 6, 2018, the Veterans Affairs Maintaining Internal Systems and Strengthening Integrated Outside Networks (VA MISSION) Act of 2018 came into law as S 2372.

SURVEYS AND CONSULTATIONS

State of Global Neurosurgery Outreach: a European survey - Ongoing ([*Global Neurosurgery WFNS*](#))

The field of Global Neurosurgery has grown rapidly in recent years, as there is increasing recognition that addressing the unmet need for neurosurgical care is an essential component of global health efforts. The WFNS has recently established a [new committee on Global Neurosurgery](#). We would like to take this opportunity and examine the the current state of outreach, information and engagement on the topic of Global Neurosurgery among European Neurosurgeons.

FOR YOUR AGENDA

EBC Meetings:

18 - 19 May 2020 - **Board Meeting and General Assembly**, Brussels

25 May 2020 - **6th Academy Meeting of National Brain Councils**, Paris

23 - 24 September 2020 - **Board Meeting and Strategic Workshop**, Brussels

Events of Interest:

17 January 2020 - [Innovative Medicines Initiative \(IMI\) Information Day](#), Sofia

3 February 2020, [Human Brain Project Open Day 2020](#), Athens

13 February 2020 - [3rd triMS.online conference](#)

16 - 22 March 2020 - Brain Awareness Week

26 - 28 March 2020 - [EANS Annual Meeting & Research Course of Young Neurosurgeons](#), Zurich

28 - 31 March 2020 - [28th European Congress of Psychiatry](#), Madrid

4 - 5 May 2020 - [EU Health Summit](#), Brussels

23 - 26 May 2020 - [6th Congress of the European Academy of Neurology](#), Paris

26 - 28 May 2020 - [HIMSS & Health 2.0 European Conference](#), Helsinki

11 - 15 July 2020 - [12th FENS Forum of Neuroscience](#), Glasgow

12 - 15 September 2020 - [33rd ECNP Congress](#), Vienna

18 - 22 October 2020 - [EANS2020](#), Belgrade



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