

Research Digest

Hanging white curtains around phototherapy units significantly increases efficacy of phototherapy

Djokomuljanto S, Quah BS, Surini Y, et al. Efficacy of phototherapy for neonatal jaundice is increased by the use of low-cost white reflecting curtains. *Arch Dis Child Fetal Neonatal Ed.* 2006; 91(6):F439-F442 [PubMed]

This is a clinical trial conducted among term newborns with uncomplicated neonatal jaundice in Universiti Sains Malaysia Hospital. It showed that the addition of low-cost reflecting curtains to a standard phototherapy unit increased the effectiveness of phototherapy. White curtain reduced serum bilirubin by an additional 23.6 $\mu\text{mol/L}$ after 4 hours of phototherapy and shortened the total duration of phototherapy. No difference in adverse events was noted.

Breast cancer is less common in Malay women but they present later and have poorer survival

Yip CH, Nur Aishah T, Mohamed I. Epidemiology of breast cancer in Malaysia. *Asian Pac J Cancer Prev.* 2006;7(3):369-74 [PubMed] [Full text]

The National Cancer Registry of Malaysia (2004) reported breast cancer age-standardised incidence rate (ASR) at 46.2 per 100,000 women (ASR per 100,000 women in Chinese, Indian and Malays were 59.7, 55.8 and 33.9, respectively). Half the cases presented below age 50. The commonest presenting symptom was a breast lump (90% of cases). The mean size of the lump was 4.2 cm, and on average, the women waited 3 months before seeking medical attention. Over the 12-year period from 1993 to 2004, one-third presented with late breast cancer.

Chikungunya outbreak in Malaysia was originated from an endemic infection

AbuBakar S, Sam IC, Wong PF, et al. Reemergence of endemic Chikungunya, Malaysia. *Emerg Infect Dis.* 2007;13(1):147-9 [PubMed] [Full text]

Chikungunya virus (CHIKV), a mosquito-borne alphavirus which causes epidemic fever, rash and polyarthralgia, has caused two outbreaks in Malaysia: in Klang, Selangor (1998) and Bagan Panchor, Perak (2006). This infection shares the same vector with dengue (*Aedes aegypti*) and also resembles dengue fever clinically (but joint pain is more severe). Phylogenetic analysis showed that the CHIKV from the 2006 outbreak is highly similar to isolates from the 1998 outbreak; but they differ from the ongoing Indian Ocean epidemic isolates and isolates from Thailand and Indonesia.

Editor's note: "Chikungunya" is derived from a Makonde word (from Tanzania) meaning "that which contorts or bends up"

Chill intake is not protective against gastric cancer

Goh KL, Cheah PL, Md N, et al. Ethnicity and *H. pylori* as risk factors for gastric cancer in Malaysia: A prospective case control study. *Am J Gastroenterol.* 2007;102(1):40-5 [PubMed]

This prospective age- and sex-matched, hospital-based case-control study performed at the University Malaya Medical Centre (87 patients with gastric cancer, 174 controls) identified the following significant risk factors of gastric cancers: Chinese race (OR=10.23), *H. pylori* (OR=2.54), low level of education (OR=9.81), smoking (OR=2.52), and high intake of salted fish and vegetables (OR=5.18). High intake of fresh fruits and vegetables was protective (OR=0.15). Chili intake was not a significant protective factor following multivariate analysis.

One in two adults snores at night. One in twelve men has obstructive sleep apnoea?

Kamil MA, Teng CL, Hassan SA. Snoring and breathing pauses during sleep in the Malaysian population. *Respirology.* 2007; 12(3):375-80 [PubMed]

This is a cross-sectional survey of community-dwelling adults aged 30-70 years ($n=1611$). The prevalence of habitual snoring, breathing pauses and excessive daytime sleepiness were 47.3%, 15.2% and 14.8%, respectively. Seven per cent of respondents (8.8% male, 5.1% female) were clinically suspected to have obstructive sleep apnoea syndrome (OSAS). The independent predictors of habitual snoring were older age, Chinese or Indian ethnicity (compared with Malays), smoking, obesity and use of sedatives.

Reovirus is a new viral agent causing acute respiratory illness

Chua KB, Crameri G, Hyatt A, et al. A previously unknown reovirus of bat origin is associated with an acute respiratory disease in humans. *Proc Natl Acad Sci USA.* 2007;104(27):11424-9 [PubMed] [Full text]

This is the first case report of reovirus (respiratory enteric orphan viruses) infection in man. Reoviruses were first isolated from humans in the early 1950s and so named because they were not associated with any known disease. A 39-year-old Malay man from Bemban, Melaka, with fever and acute respiratory illness was found to have a previously unknown reovirus (named "Melaka virus" or MelV) in his throat swab. He and four other family members were also found to have serological response to MelV (although two of them were asymptomatic). He reported that one week prior to his illness, a bat flew into his living room while he was watching television.

Editor's note: Look like the name Melaka virus is here to stay despite political protest