March Issue

Part One

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Health

Wedding-related weight change: The ups and downs of love

Body Image | http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.bodyim.2013.12.005

Brides put on comfort weight post-wedding

Weddings are a stressful time for many brides as they are aiming to look their best for the big day. This study, published in Body Image, looked at wedding-related weight change in over three hundred brides recruited from bridal fairs. Although close to 50% of brides-to-be indicated a desire to lose weight before their weddings, average weight did not change pre-wedding. Six months post-wedding, participants had gained on average 2.14kg and those who were told to lose weight pre-wedding gained significantly more weight post-wedding.
**Antidepressant-like activity of beta-carotene in unstressed and chronic unpredictable mild stressed mice**

*Journal of Functional Foods* | http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jff.2014.01.015

**Beta-carotene could hold anti-depressant properties**

Beta-carotene is a red-orange pigment found in abundance in plants and fruits such as carrots, pumpkins and sweet potatoes. The human body converts beta-carotene into vitamin A, an essential vitamin for healthy skin, protection for our immune system and good eye health. This study, published in the *Journal of Functional Foods*, has found that beta-carotene may also hold significant antidepressant-like properties as it reverses stress-induced activity in the brain.

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**Physical stature decline and the health status of the elderly population in England**


**Getting shorter when older indicates decline in health**

Few studies have examined the causes of stature decline in the older population which, in most cases, results in a 2-4cm relative reduction in height over a life time. This study published in *Economics and Human Biology*, highlights that reduction in height is an important phenomenon among those aged 50 or over. The findings demonstrate that deteriorating health and reductions in height occur simultaneously, with declines in muscle mass and bone density suggested as the cause.

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**Science and Technology**

**Happiness and nature-based vacations**

*Annals of Tourism Research* | http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2014.02.002

**Being close to nature increases our happiness**

Our surroundings often play a part in how we feel emotionally. This study, published in *Annals of Tourism Research*, looked at the impact of nature on personal well-being. A survey was carried out in Maremma, a well-known beach and nature tourism destination located on the coast of Tuscany in Italy. Results showed that proximity to nature can boost personal emotional and physical well-being and that reconnecting people with nature is not only beneficial for the preservation of the environment, but also for people’s happiness.

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**Sensory descriptive profiling and consumer preferences of beef strip loin steaks**

*Food Research International* | http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.foodres.2014.01.061

**The secret to the perfect steak**

With everyone having a distinct preference for how they like it prepared, steak is notoriously difficult to cook to perfection; this study, published in *Food Research International*, looked to determine the descriptive sensory profile of beef strip loin steaks. They examined two cooking methods, oven and griddled, to three end-point temperatures (65, 71 and 77 °c), and the acceptability of these steaks to diners. The preferred appearance, aroma and flavour came from the steaks cooked at the highest temperatures and the tenderness and juiciness of samples scored highest when cooked at the lowest temperatures. Steaks griddled at 65°C had a much higher acceptance rate than those cooked in the oven.
**Daylight and absenteeism – Evidence from Norway**

*Economics and Human Biology* | [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ehb.2014.01.002](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ehb.2014.01.002)

**How the seasons affect sickness and return to work rates**

As we approach the time of year where clocks are changed and we see a change in daylight hours, one can wonder whether this will affect how much time we spend at work? This study, published in *Economics and Human Biology*, looked at the impact of hours of daylight on sick-leave absences among workers. Results showed that one more hour of daylight raises incidence of sickness absence to 0.5% and raised recovery from sickness absence to 0.8%. Absenteeism is also sensitive to weather conditions: heavy snowfall raises the incidence of absence in the winter, while warm weather reduces the probability of returning to work during the summer.

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