April Issue
Part One

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Health

Asthma exacerbation in children: Relationship among pollens, weather, and air pollution

Allergologia et Immunopathologia | http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.aller.2013.02.006

Asthma risks higher in spring and fall

Asthma is a common condition among children and may get worse depending on environmental factors. This study, published in Allergologia et Immunopathologia, looked at cases of asthma exacerbation (the acute worsening of asthmatic symptoms) in children to determine the relationship with environmental factors. Results, collected over a ten year period, demonstrate that there were seasonal peaks in asthma exacerbation (spring and fall). Pollens, wind speed and rainfall were all strongly associated with an increase in symptoms, as were a rise in the levels of sulphur dioxide, nobelium, ozone and nitrogen dioxide in the air.
Variation in Suicide Occurrence by Day and during Major American Holidays


**Sundays, Mondays, Spring and Fall linked to more suicides**

This study, published in *The Journal of Emergency Medicine*, looked at temporal variations in suicide rates to determine whether particular days of the week, seasons or holidays were associated with increased suicide (attempt) rates. Results, from over a million cases, revealed that Sundays and Mondays were the most common days for suicide in adults, with numbers rising in spring and fall.

Study on quality components and sleep-promoting effect of GABA Maoyecha tea

*Journal of Functional Foods* | http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jff.2014.02.013

**Chinese tea could help to promote sleep**

Maoyecha tea is a non-caffeine and high-theobromine tea variety from Southern China. This study, published in the *Journal of Functional Foods*, analysed the impact of maoyecha tea on sleep. Results showed that the maoyecha tea had no stimulating effects (unlike typical caffeinated tea), but did have sleep-promoting effects on individuals who drank it.

Science and Technology

Male vulnerability explains the occurrence of sexual cannibalism in a moderately sexually dimorphic wolf spider

*Behavioural Processes* | http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.beproc.2014.03.002

**Female spiders get fitness boost from eating their mates**

Arachnophobia is a common fear among many humans, but it could well be that spiders are also feared by their own kind. This study, published in *Behavioural Processes*, measured causes and fitness benefits of sexual cannibalism in a moderately dimorphic wolf spider. Results showed that sexual cannibalism positively affected female fitness, regardless of the size of female, their general condition or their foraging rate. It was also found that smaller males and relatively older males were at higher risk of attack.

Effect of human saliva and sip volume of coffee brews on the release of key volatile compounds by a retronasal aroma simulator

*Food Research International* | http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.foodres.2014.02.034

**Coffee brewing technique and sip size have an effect on what you smell of coffee**

It is well known that smell and taste are related and that one can have a significant impact on the other. This study, published in *Food Research International*, looked at sip volume and the impact it has on coffee brew aroma. It was found that every brewing technique appeared to imply a different behaviour in the aroma release; and that the bigger the sip taken, the more aldehydes (or fragrance) that were released.
Watchful eyes: implicit observability cues and voting

*Evolution and Human Behavior* / http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.evolhumbehav.2014.02.008

**Prosocial behaviour could be influenced by ‘Big Brother’ watching you**

Explicit social pressure can be a powerful motivator of prosocial behavior. This study, published in *Evolution and Human Behavior*, looked at the impact of subtle social pressure on voting behavior. Results showed that subtle observability cues, like a pair of stylised eyes facing subjects during voting, effectively mobilised citizens to vote. This provides strong support for the notion that humans are evolutionarily programmed to respond to certain stimuli and that exposure to images that implicitly signal observability may stimulate prosocial behavior.