Health

**Alcohol consumption and mortality: a dose-response analysis in terms of time**


**In small doses – alcohol consumption is tied to longer survival**

Low-to-moderate alcohol consumption is associated with decreased mortality. However, many aspects of this association are still debated. This study, published in *Annals of Epidemiology*, conducted a dose-response analysis of the association between alcohol consumption and life span in over 67,000 people. Results showed that low alcohol consumption was associated with improved survival up to 1.5 years for women with an average consumption of 0.5 drinks a day and 1.3 years for men with an average consumption of 1.5 drinks per day. After this peak, higher alcohol consumption was progressively associated with shorter survival.

Social Science & Medicine | http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2014.01.027

Doubts with regards to not breastfeeding may be overstated

The benefits of breastfeeding are regularly debated in health literature. This study, published in Social Science & Medicine, used sibling comparisons to estimate the effect of breastfeeding on long-term child wellbeing. Results showed that differences in outcomes of, for example BMI rates, sensitivity for asthma, level of hyperactivity, attachment style, compliance, academic achievement and competence, were substantially attenuated when comparing siblings. This suggests that typical estimates of the impact of not breastfeeding on child wellbeing may be overstated.

Pain relief by touch: A quantitative approach

PAIN® | http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.pain.2013.12.024

Touch near to pain source can ease effects

Pain relief by touch has been studied for decades in neuroscience. This study, published in PAIN®, measured pain perception using intensity ratings, qualitative descriptors and signal detection measures of sensitivity in order to determine how and where touch modulates pain. Results showed that touch concurrent with laser pulses produce a significant analgesia and reduced the sensitivity in detecting the energy of laser stimulation. This effect decreased when the distance between the laser and the touch point were increased; showing a relationship between the space between the pain and touch stimuli.

Science and Technology

Yeast is an essential component for good chocolate

International Journal of Food Microbiology | http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ijfoodmicro.2013.12.014

Cocoa beans are the major raw material for chocolate production and fermentation of the beans is essential for the development of chocolate flavor precursors. In this study, published in the International Journal of Food Microbiology, a novel approach was used to determine the role of yeast in cocoa fermentation and their contribution to chocolate quality. Quality tests revealed that beans fermented without yeast were purplish-violet in color and not fully brown; chocolate prepared from these beans tasted more acidic and lacked characteristic chocolate flavor. Beans fermented with yeast were fully brown in color and produced chocolate with more of the typical flavor characteristics, which were clearly preferred by sensory panels.
Heat stress impairs the nutritional metabolism and reduces the productivity of egg-laying ducks

Animal Reproduction Science | http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.anireprosci.2014.01.002

Heat-stress decreases productivity in ducks

This study, published in Animal Reproduction Science, looked to determine the effect of constant high temperature on the nutritional metabolism and productivity of egg-laying shelducks. Results showed that heat-exposure had a number of effects on the ducks including: reduced feed intake and rate of laying eggs; increased frequency of panting and spreading wings and negative effects on eggs produced.

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