

Health & Fitness

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MEDICAL BRIEFS

Restless legs

Do your legs develop a mind of their own come bedtime? Do they want to jump, jab and jive when the rest of you wants to sleep? You may have restless leg syndrome, often described as "the creepy crawlies."

The Restless Leg Syndrome Support Group will hold two meetings in May at Henry Ford OptimEyes, 35184 Central City Parkway in Westland. The first meeting, scheduled 7 p.m. Tuesday, May 16, will feature a video by California-based physician Dr. Vuchihur. The second meeting, scheduled 2 p.m. Tuesday, May 23, will feature Garden City Hospital nurse Marilyn Armbrust as the featured speaker.

For more information, call Jan Prentiss at (734) 453-4847.

Hot flash!

There's more to getting through menopause than battling your hormones. There's humor and there's art.

Jennifer Tobin, executive director of the Plymouth Community Arts Council will discuss "Creating a Healthy Life Through the Arts" at St. Mary Hospital's Menopause Support Group, which meets 7-9 p.m. Wednesday, May 3 in the West Addition Conference Room B, Marri-on Women's Center, 36475 Five Mile Road, Livonia.

The group meets the first Wednesday of the month. There is no charge. For more information, call 734-655-1100.

Prostate screening

Botsford General Hospital will host a free lecture on prostate cancer 7 p.m. Monday, May 1, in the Ziegler Center on the Botsford General Hospital campus, 28050 Grand River. Dr. Steven Roth, a staff urologist, will be the speaker. An interpreter of American Sign Language will be present.

The hospital will also sponsor free prostate screening from 9 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Friday, May 12. Registration for the lecture and the screen are required. For information, call Botsford's Health Development Network at (248) 477-6100.

Free MS programs and services

Local residents with multiple sclerosis can receive a wide array of free, direct support services that range from information to therapeutic equipment through the Multiple Sclerosis Association of America.

MSAA services include:

- Educational literature
- A national lending library program that exceeds 100 titles
- No-cost HMRs for people suspected of having MS
- Cool suits to help reduce symptoms
- Wheelchairs and scooters
- Support groups and programs designed to link clients together via mail, phone, or computer.

For more information, contact MSAA at 1-800-LEARN MS or access www.msaa.org

We want YOUR business stories!
There are several ways you can reach The Observer Health & Fitness staff. The Business Column is a great place for you to offer news-worthy information including Medical Database (upcoming calendar events); Medical Newsmakers (appointments/ new hires in the medical field); and Medical Briefs (medical advances, new news items from hospitals, physician news, etc.). We also welcome news items from local health and fitness related stories. To submit an item to our newspaper you can call, write, fax or e-mail us.

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AROMA 'THERAPY'

Olfactory study shows effects of scent on physical performance

By RENEE SKOGLUND
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Attention, athletes and fitness buffs. Want to get more out of your workout or sports performance? Start with your nose!

A study sponsored by the Olfactory Research Fund, whose sponsors include several international fragrance companies — such as The Dial Corporation, Avon Products and Christian Dior Parfums — showed that scent can have a consistent and reliable effects on a person's mental condition during exercise.

Bryan Raudenbush, an assistant professor of psychology at Wheeling Jesuit University in Wheeling, W. Va., recently completed a study on the "Effects of Odors on Objective and Subjective Measures of Physical Performance." Forty male and female undergraduates from sports teams at Wheeling were the subjects.

Participants spent 15 minutes walking on a treadmill with speed and grade increasing every three minutes. The exercise was performed four times, each time under a different odor condition. The overwhelming response? Peppermint odor was associated with lower ratings of physical workload and demand.

Participants found the exercise easier and more slow-paced with peppermint, compared to no odor or unpleasant odor. The peppermint odor also produced a significant reduction in perceptions of frustration that many of us associate with exercise.

Pene Murdoch, a nationally certified massage therapist with Healing Arts Massage Center in Plymouth, uses essential oils in her practice. Peppermint oil, besides being an anti-inflammatory, is a great "pick up" scent, she said. She uses it with clients to combat headache and fatigue.

"I sell bottles of peppermint oil and tell clients to keep it in their purse."

Smell power

As humans, we "see" the world mostly through our eyes and ears. We give little importance to the sense of smell within the dynamics of our daily lives. Yet, smells move us in profound ways — consider fresh baked bread, a roast browning in garlic and butter, a particular perfume, or the smell of a new car — and instantly memories and emotions come calling from the past.

"Eyes have a limited range of color and taste can only identify four things — sweet, sour, salt and bitter — but smell can detect more than 10,000 odors," said Murdoch. "The sense of smell is the first one to develop in the womb. Older adults who lose the sense of smell have more problems with depression."

Simply put, smells both anchor us to the present and connect us to the past. When our nose is blocked by a cold, suddenly the

whole world becomes bland.

The National Association for Holistic Aromatherapy defines the effect of inhalation of essential oils as:

"When inhaled, essential oil component molecules enter the nasal passage where they stimulate the olfactory nerve, sending messages directly into the limbic system of the brain. The limbic system is the seat of memory, learning and emotion. The inhalation of essential oils triggers changes within the limbic system, which in turn can stimulate physiological responses with the body via the nervous, endocrine or immune systems."

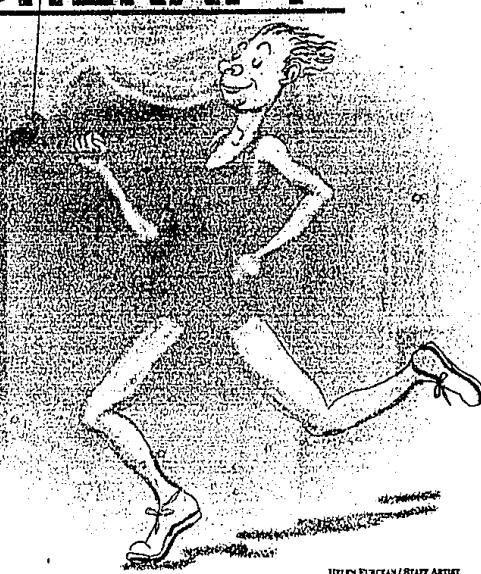
"For example, if the aroma of cinnamon is reminiscent to a particular individual of traditional hot apple pie baking in the oven, an emotional response such as comfort, warmth and security may therefore accompany the inhalation of cinnamon zeylanicum essential oil. This emotional response, triggered by a mental association, creates a relaxed and comforted response from the body."

Even if we have no memory or association with the scent of certain essential oils, they can still produce a relaxed, stimulated or soothed state, according to the NAHA.

When Murdoch feared nodding off in class during her college years, she enlisted the help of rosemary oil. "I'd coat the tops of the pages I was working on, and it worked. I got great grades," she said.

Oils and emotions

In the September 1995 edition of "Advertising Age," author Pat Sloan wrote that Dr. Alan Hirsch, neurological director of the Smell & Taste Treatment & Research Foundation



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in Chicago, discovered a link between environmental scents and the inclination to spend money. His experiments showed that people bought more Nike shoes in a floral scented room than in an unscented room and inserted more money into scented slot machines in Las Vegas than in scent-free ones.

The Olfactory Research Fund has coined the term "aroma-chology" to refer to the collecting of systematic, scientific data under controlled conditions to establish a relationship between psychology and fragrance/technology's ability to transmit through odor a variety of specific feelings — relaxation, exhilaration, sensuality, happiness and achievement.

On the other hand, the Olfactory Research Fund defines aromatherapy as a concept based on anecdotal individual case studies and folklore.

Aromatherapy prescribes the use of natural essential oils and herbs for the treatment of various mental and physical disorders. It is generally used in combination with body massage.

Murdoch uses a variety of essential oils in her massage practice. She claims that many oils, because their molecules are so small, are absorbed directly into the bloodstream through the skin.

"You can actually rub garlic on the soles of your feet and taste it a half hour later," said Murdoch.

Uses

The following are some of oils Murdoch uses for specific purposes:

■ Lavender — Antidepressant, antibiotic. Helps heal burns and wounds. Induces sleep.

■ Peppermint — Anti-inflammatory. Good for headaches and fatigue. Improves accuracy and alertness.

■ Chamomile — Calming. Good for asthma, hay fever and nervousness. Strong scent. Murdoch mixes it with a lotion. Needs to be diluted.

■ Sandalwood — Soothes people in distress or grief. Helps people keep their emotions from over-expressing. Needs to be diluted.

■ Eucalyptus — Great for colds, coughs and sunburn. Combined with peppermint, "it will clear a head really fast," said Murdoch. Needs to be diluted.

■ Rose — Good for people going through a divorce or break-up. Evokes feelings of comfort and love. Very expensive. Best diluted.

■ Ylang ylang — A "high floral" scent. Associated with euphoria and considered an aphrodisiac. A little goes a long way.

■ Clove — Acts as an analgesic. Best diluted.

■ Geranium — Pain-reliever. Helps stomach aches and sore throats. May soothe discomfort of endometriosis.

■ Rosemary — Stimulant. Helps with memory loss and depression.

■ Tea tree — Medicinal, anti-fungal. Good for athletes foot, acne, toothache and sunburn.

■ Citrus (orange, tangerine, lemon and grapefruit) — Improves children's moods. Keeps adult's energy levels up.

■ Vanilla — Relaxing and calming. Men love it. "It evokes memories of mother. You go into the florals, and it starts to smell like a lover. Vanilla smells like the kitchen," said Murdoch.

Used topically and properly diluted, essential oils have endless applications for health, beauty and well-being, recommends the NAHA. Keep in mind, however, that no two people are affected by the same oil in the same way. And Murdoch stresses that essential oils don't cure everything that ails us, but they assist.

Contact Pene Murdoch at Healing Arts Massage Therapy, 383 Starkweather, Plymouth, (734) 542-1460.

MS oral drug study at Wayne State University

For people living with relapsing-remitting multiple sclerosis, the only treatment options available today involve regular injections with a needle. The landmark CORAL Study will investigate whether a new medication could change that.

The CORAL Study is the first global clinical study for an oral MS therapy. It spans five continents, 18 countries and will involve 178 study sites. Researchers are seeking to recruit 1,300 participants worldwide, including 600-700 Americans.

Wayne State University, the only comprehensive research center for MS in Michigan, is one of 87 sites in the United States.

The study's purpose is to assess the safety, efficacy and tolerability of an oral formulation of COPAXONE (glatiramer acetate for injection) in people with relapsing-remitting MS.

An oral therapy is a significant development. Many people are uncomfortable self-injecting, so finding alternative methods of delivery is critical," said Dr. Jerry S. Wolinsky, chairman of the CORAL

Study's North American Clinical Steering Committee and director of the Multiple Sclerosis Research Group at The University of Texas-Houston Health Science Center.

Locally, the study is spearheaded by Dr. Omar Khan at the Wayne State University Health Center. He emphasized the significance of an oral MS medication in drawing more MS patients into treatment.

"There are still thousands who are not interested in treatment because of the injections. Some people have needle phobia," he said.

The CORAL Study is a randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled study. Participants will receive a daily dose of one of the following: 50 mg or oral glatiramer acetate, 5 mg of oral glatiramer acetate, or a matching placebo.

The CORAL Study is a Phase III clinical study. Phase III studies follow years of extensive research and are often the final step before a request is made to the Food and Drug Administration for approval to market a drug.

The study will last 56 weeks; enrollment is expected to last at least six months. Teva Marion Partners along with Tova Pharmaceutical Industries Ltd., the marketers and manufacturer of COPAXONE respectively, are sponsoring the study.

People with a confirmed diagnosis of relapsing-remitting MS who are interested in participating in the CORAL Study should call the Wayne State University Multiple Sclerosis Center at (313) 745-4220. They may also call toll-free 1-877-31CORNAL (312-0725) for a pre-screening.