Flu jabs ‘more effective’ in morning

Hydrocortisone may prevent bronchopulmonary dysplasia, or BPD, in premature newborns given oxygen treatments after birth, according to a recent study.

The steroid reduced damage in newborn mice with a rodent version of BPD, suggesting the chronic lung disease and heart failure of many babies born early could be avoided, researchers at Northwestern University report.

Premature infants require oxygen to continue development after birth, but it can damage their lungs, reducing their ability to fill air. Over time, the damage causes blood vessels in the lungs to harden, which often leads to heart failure, UPI wrote.

“Supplemental oxygen has been our standard treatment for critically ill preemies, and while needed, it’s not without its risk,” said Dr. Katherine Farrow, a neonatologist at Lurie Children’s Hospital and an associate professor of pediatrics at Northwestern University, said. “Our findings provide new insights and new possible pathways to mitigate or completely eliminate the damaging side effects of an otherwise lifesaving therapy.”

For the study, published in the journal Pediatric Research, the researchers put one group of mice in a chamber breathing high levels of oxygen, and another group in a chamber breathing normal air in the room. When mice breathing more oxygen started showing signs of BPD, they were treated with either hydrocortisone or a placebo.

While mice receiving the plaques developed hyperension, hardened blood vessels and an enlarged heart, those who got the steroid had nearly normal hearts and blood vessels and no hypertension, despite also having BPD.

Although hydrocortisone prevented the conditions, too much of the steroid damaged the rodents’ lungs, the researchers also found, suggesting a sweet spot if the steroid has a similar effect on humans with BPD.

“Bronchopulmonary dysplasia is a devastating, often unavoidable side effect of a standard lifesaving therapy with oxygen said to treat newborn babies, but our findings are a promising indicator that a well-known drug that’s been around for a long time may help stave off some of this condition’s worst after-effects,” said Dr. Martha Perez, an assistant professor of pediatrics at Northwestern.

The researchers analyzed data on more than 75,000 children (aged four to seven) from the 2011-12 National Survey of Child Health, conducted by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Parents were asked whether they had ever been told their child had had some type of vision problem that was not correctable with standard glasses or contact lenses.

Examples of such conditions include disorders of eye alignment or eye movement, such as strabismus or nystagmus.

A current diagnosis of ADHD was reported for 15.6 percent of children with vision problems, compared to 8.3 percent of those without vision problems.

The findings add new evidence that children with vision problems not correctable by glasses or contact lenses have a higher prevalence of ADHD. The association is independent of differences in patient and family characteristics, the study said.

Rice, rice products may expose US infants to arsenic

Infant rice cereal and rice snacks contain some arsenic, and babies who eat these products have higher levels of arsenic in their urine, a study shows.

It’s not clear yet whether the arsenic will affect their health down the line, the researchers wrote.

“We kept rice cereal as a typical first food for babies — but we know very little about how common it is to feed infants rice cereal in the US, or about the timing of introduction of rice cereal,” said lead author Margarita Karagas, of the Geisel School of Medicine at Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire.

“Rice grains can take up arsenic from their environment, and US rice has some of the highest arsenic concentrations in the world,” she said.

“Arsenic is a known carcinogen that can influence risk of cardiovascular, immune and other diseases,” Karagas said.

“There’s a growing body of evidence that even relatively low levels of exposure may have adverse health impacts on young children including on growth, immunity and neurodevelopment.”

She and her team are still investigating whether the infants in this study had any health effects due to arsenic exposure, she said.

The researchers studied 719 infants born to mothers aged 18 to 43. Parents reported their infant’s intake of rice products like rice cakes or puffs or dried breakfast cereals containing rice, or brands of cereal bars mixed with brown rice ceral, in interviews when the baby was four, eight and 12 months of age. The researchers also collected infant urine samples to test for arsenic levels.

About 80 percent of the children were introduced to rice cereal before age one, and a third were eating rice snacks by their first birthday.

Among kids who did not eat fish or seafood, urinary arsenic concentrations were higher for those who ate infant rice cereal or snack than for those who did not, according to results at JAMA Pediatrics.

The researchers also tested for arsenic levels in some of the more commonly reported rice snacks.

Inorganic arsenic exposure has been linked to cancer as well as other health problems such as neurological, cardiovascular, respiratory and metabolic conditions, said Dr. Satinath Bhasin, executive director of the Institute for Global Food Security at Queen’s University Belfast in Northern Ireland.

The WHO has warned that keeping out of the sun will slow the aging process people’s skin.

Dr. Andrew Loudon and David Ray, a pair of body clock professors at the University of Manchester, said, “This may be the dawn of the body clock in the clinic.”

“This is a most interesting study, and is among the first to show how the body clock can be used to make healthcare interventions more effective.”

“Supplemental oxygen has been our standard treatment for critically ill preemies, and while needed, it’s not without its risk,” said Dr. Katherine Farrow, a neonatologist at Lurie Children’s Hospital and an associate professor of pediatrics at Northwestern University, said. “Our findings provide new insights and new possible pathways to mitigate or completely eliminate the damaging side effects of an otherwise lifesaving therapy.”

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Malaria deaths rising in Angola

Deaths from malaria in Angola this year look set to outstrip 2015 as a health crisis of a heart attack in a daily rhythm.

They were vaccinated either in a morning session (09:00 to 11:00) or an afternoon appointment (13:00 to 17:00). One month later, patients vaccinated in the morning had produced significantly more antibodies against two of the three strains of the jab compared with 8,000 for the whole of 2015 and 5,500 the previous year, the WHO told Reuters.

“Many people may not come back for a second dose of the vaccine, and in small children, one of the country’s worst yellow fever outbreaks in decades spreads, the study’s lead author David DeCarlo from the University of Alabama at Birmingham, the US said. The finding appeared in the journal of the American Academy of Optometry, timesindiaindiatimes.com wrote.

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