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Announcements

The January Issue 2018 (vol 62-1) is under printing.
Original Articles

A Novel Practical to Demonstrate Systemic and Local Regulation of Circulation in A Human Subject: Manpreet Kaur, Dinu S. Chandran, Ashok K. Jaryal and Kishore K. Deepak ... 217

Cardiac Autonomic Neuropathy in Type II Diabetes Mellitus Patients and its Association with the Age of the Patient, Duration of Disease and Glycemic Control: V. Nagalakshmi, V. Smruthi, Shama, Gauthan Rathnakarashetty and Shobha C. Nallulwar ... 222

Do Congenitally Blind Individuals have Better Haptic Object Perception Compared to Blindfolded Sighted Individuals?: B.G. Bhurud, L.M. Chandan and A. Chawla ... 230

Hindi and English Letter Cancellation Tasks: Does language have an effect on performance?: Abhinav Dixit and Ankit Kumar Rai ... 235

Correlation of Audio-Visual Reaction Time with Body Mass Index & Skin Fold Thickness Between Runners and Healthy Controls: S. Jyothi, Sunil S. Vernekar, Manishankar, L. Jayalakshmi, Vinothkumar and R. Rashmi ... 239

Comparison of Cardiovascular Parameters and Cardiac Autonomic Activity of Obese and Normal Weight School Children in Puducherry: R. Rajalakshmi, Susheela Veilath, N. Krishnamurthy and M. Thenmozhi ... 247

Sub-clinical Hypothyroidism in Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus Patients in a Tertiary Care Hospital, Mysore: Srinath C. Galag, R. Rajalakshmi, K.M. Srinath and B. Madhu ... 255

Cardiorespiratory Fitness and Heart Rate Recovery in Type II Diabetic Males: The Effect of Adiposity: Hanjabam Barun Sharma, Abha Shrivastava, Yogesh Saxena and Anita Sharma ... 260

Evaluation of the Protective Effect of NMDA/Non-NMDA Receptor Antagonists Against Ethambutol Induced Retinal Toxicity Using ERG in Wistar Rats: A.R. Vijayakumar, H. Anuradha, Nihar Ranjan Biswas, Vimla Menon, Rohit Saxena, Nabamita Haldar and T. Velpandian ... 268

Pharmaceutical Interventions for Vascular Targeting In Retinopathy of Prematurity: An Experimental Study: Neetima Aron, Madhu Nath, Shorya Vardhan Azad, Prijat Chandra, Raj
Medical Education

Perceptions of Post-graduate Students Towards M.D. Physiology Curriculum in India: Noorin Bhimani and Priyadarshini Mishra...291

Letter to Editor

Electrolyte Abnormalities in Cisplatin Based Chemotherapy: S. Nikhil and Aravindh S. Anand ...298

Endocrinology Coverage in The Haryana EML (Essential Medicines List): Dr. Garima Bhutani, Dr. Sanjay Kalra and Dr. Prem Kumar Verma ...300

High Steroid Usage Among Reproductive-aged Farmers in Underserved Area in Indonesia, Langkat, South Seurui Village: Sarma Nursani Lumbanraja ...302

Enteric Glial Cells and Inflammatory Bowel Disease: Friend or Foe: Purnima Sharma ...304

News and Announcement

News and Announcements ...306
High Steroid Usage Among Reproductive-aged Farmers in Underserved Area in Indonesia, Langkat, South Securai Village

(Received on January 1, 2016)

Sir,

Analgesics had become one of the top highly demand over-the-counter drugs in many countries, also in Indonesia (1). Dale et al. reported prevalence of using over-the-counter analgesics at least once per week was 47% (2). Steroid had become the most consumed drug that can be obtained easily. Ely et al. showed that 28.8% of 758 elderly persons used one to four analgesics, which mostly were steroids (3).

Steroids are used in almost all medical specialties. In US, Overman reported 1.2% of the populations consume long term glucocorticoids (4). In UK, Staa et al. (2000) reported percentages of 0.85-0.9%, mostly in aged 70–79 years people (5). Gudorjsoon showed that most patients use more than one GC with mean average of 47 months intake (6).

In our observational study priorly, we found that almost all reproductive aged farmers in South Securai village consumed analgesics. They suffered from joint and muscle pain due to their jobs as farmers. Indeed, steroids was largely used, in addition, they could obtain these drugs easily.

Dexamethasone was the mostly used steroid among farmers. Mean length of steroid use was found to be above 5 years. Two thirds had reported routine thrice daily consumption of steroid due to joint pain, fatigue, and desire to increase stamina. From our study, we found that far access to primary care, no health insurance, availability of steroid over the counter, were the factors that affected steroid usage in most subjects.

Clinicians must be aware of this condition as steroid had many devastating side effects. Knowledge of steroid use was also still low. Despite mostly knew that steroid can cause weight gain and moon face, they did not know about the increase risk of diabetes mellitus, delayed growth, lower mass density, hypertension about what they were consumed.

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References


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Friederike Eisner, Diana Hermann, Khaled Bajaeifer, Jörg Glatzle, Alfred Königsrainer, Markus A. Küper. "Gastric Ulcer Complications after the Introduction of Proton Pump Inhibitors
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