

Sunday Health

New hope for treating Alzheimer's

Whenever we ask patients what their biggest fear is regarding their health, the answer is fairly unanimous.

They are most afraid of losing their minds. If you gave people a choice between getting cancer or Alzheimer's, the vast majority would pick cancer. National studies reflect similar feelings all over the country.

But concern doesn't seem to be helping the situation. In the United States, 5.4 million people suffer with Alzheimer's disease. By mid-century, someone will develop the disease every 33 seconds. It is unrelenting and, as of now, there have been limited options for treatment.

However, there are some promising treatments and therapies.

Researchers in Australia have taken mice that were bred to have Alzheimer's disease and treated their brains with ultrasound. They zapped the amyloid plaques and tangles that are suspected to be responsible for the disease.

After treatment, 75 percent of the mice reverted to normal and there was no damage to the surrounding brain tissue. Human trials are slated for 2017. This treatment could definitely be a game-changer.



The Doctor
is in

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Dr. Robin Miller
David Kahn, CPT



Another treatment, something that may also change the prognosis for the disease, is the one implemented in the metabolic enhancement for neurodegeneration study at UCLA. This study has shown that memory loss in patients can be reversed and sustained.

Researchers used a 36-point therapeutic personalized program to affect change. The program incorporated a healthy diet, brain stimulation, exercise, sleep optimization, specific vitamins and medication to lower cholesterol and regulate blood pressure, and other programs such as meditation and yoga for stress relief.

It was a small study that was done in 10 people with varying degrees of dementia. Nine out of 10 were able to reverse their disease by strictly following the

program.

Finally, an important though not as recent study of seniors who were on average 75 to start with was done over the course of 21 years at the Albert Einstein School of Medicine.

Researchers found there were certain activities that reduced the risk for Alzheimer's disease. Reading reduced the risk by 35 percent; doing crossword puzzles reduced it by 47 percent; playing golf, bicycling and swimming reduced it by 0 percent. Ballroom dancing two or three times a week reduced the risk by a whopping 75 percent.

What is exciting about all of these treatments and therapies is they do not appear to have any toxicity associated with them. It is good that zapping the brain could potentially treat the

disease once it forms, and it is good that eating healthy in conjunction with exercise may reverse it. Knowing there is something fun, that is good for the body and can prevent it Alzheimer's — now that is priceless!

You can see Robin Miller on KOBI-TV Channel 5 on Mondays for "Doctors on Call" and Tuesdays for "Focus on Health." Miller is currently practicing at Triune Integrative Medicine Clinic. For more information on the clinic, see www.TriuneMed.com. To send a question for an upcoming column — your anonymity is assured — e-mail it to edecker@thedailycourier.com or mail it to Dr. Miller in care of The Daily Courier, P.O. Box 1468, Grants Pass, OR 97528.

David Kahn is an instructor in English at RCC and is a certified personal trainer with the American Council of Exercise. He is the author of "Teid Diet."

The Daily Courier, Dr. Miller and Mr. Kahn suggest you check with your own physician before changing or starting treatment and are not liable for any damages resulting from misuse of the information in this column.

Conjoined twins successfully separated

Associated Press

PALO ALTO, Calif. — Conjoined California twins Eva and Erika Sandoval have become two separate toddlers following a 17-hour marathon surgery and are recovering "quite well," officials said Thursday.

The Sacramento Bee reported the 2-year-old Sacramento area girls were born conjoined from the chest down and shared a bladder, liver, parts of their digestive system and a third leg.

Their parents said each girl has retained portions of the organs they shared. Each girl still has one leg and surgeons told the newspaper both would likely need a prosthetic leg. The third limb was used for skin grafts to cover surgical wounds.

Their parents were overjoyed with the success of the separation, which has been in the planning stages since before the girls were born.

"They look amazing. They're amazing. They have their hair done, and they're resting," said mother Aida Sandoval. "We're just going to take it one day at a



In this photo provided by Lucile Packard Children's Hospital Stanford, conjoined twins Eva and Erika Sandoval say goodbye to their family before being taken to the operating room for separation.

time and let them catch up on their rest."

At a news conference she said she has seen the twins separated and awake.

"The first time I saw the girls it was very surreal," she said.

"And it's still very surreal."

Speaking through tears and in both Spanish and English, she said it's been a "long journey to get here."

"It's really been a dream come true," she said.

The twins are in stable condition and are expected to remain in intensive care for up to two weeks, Lucile Packard Children's Hospital Stanford officials said.

Lead surgeon Dr. Gary Hartman said a team of 50 worked on the procedure.

"(It's) the same goal we have for all of our children: that we end up with two, happy healthy girls," Hartman said.

"Anyone who saw the girls before surgery can testify to the happy part," which he credited entirely to their parents, Hartman said. "We think that this week we made a big step toward the healthy part. The girls are recovering quite well."

He also explained that each girl now has half a belly button so in the future they will always remember their connection to the other girl.

Following such surgeries, the first 72 hours are typically the most critical, said Dr. James Goodrich, director of pediatric neurosurgery at Children's Hospital at Montefiore in New York. Goodrich has successfully performed seven cranial separations of twins joined at the brain.

Health briefs

STD still a problem in Josephine County

Gonorrhea continues to be a problem in Josephine County, with 77 infections reported through November, according to the county's health department. Last year, 79 cases were diagnosed.

In a news release, the department made the following suggestions to lower a person's chances of contracting the sexually transmitted disease:

- Be in a long-term mutually monogamous relationship with a partner who has been tested and has negative test results for STDs.

- Use latex condoms the right way every time you have sex.

- If you are sexually active, have an honest and open talk with your health care provider and ask whether you should be

tested for gonorrhea or other STDs.

- If you are a sexually active man who is gay, bisexual, or who has sex with men, you should be tested for gonorrhea every year.

- If you are a sexually active woman younger than 25 years or an older woman with risk factors such as new or multiple sex partners, or a sex partner who has a sexually transmitted infection, you should be tested for gonorrhea every year.

Some men with gonorrhea may have no symptoms, which can include a burning sensation when urinating; a white, yellow, or green discharge from the penis; or painful or swollen testicles.

Most women with gonorrhea do not have any symptoms, which often are mild and can be mistaken for a bladder or vagi-

nal infection. However, serious complications can occur. Symptoms can include painful or burning sensation when urinating, increased vaginal discharge and vaginal bleeding between periods.

Gonorrhea can be cured with the right treatment. For more information or appointment, call the health department at 541-474-2254.

Red Cross blood drives set this month

Upcoming blood donation opportunities through the American Red Cross include the following:

- 8-11 a.m. Monday at the YMCA, 1000 Redwood Ave.
- 1:30-4:30 p.m. Monday at Umpqua Bank, 117 N.E. F St.
- 1-6 p.m. Wednesday at the Seventh-day Adventist Church,

1360 N.E. Ninth St.

- Noon-5 p.m. Thursday at Newman United Methodist Church, 132 N.E. B St.

- 1-5:30 p.m. Dec. 22 at the Illinois Valley Senior Center, 520 E. River St., Cave Junction.

- 9:45 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. Dec. 23 at Calvary Lutheran Church, 909 N.E. A St.

- 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Dec. 27 at St. Anne Catholic Church, 1131 N.E. 10th St.

- 12:30-5:30 p.m. Dec. 28 at Rogue River Fire District offices, 5474 North River Road.

- 1-6 p.m. Dec. 29 at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1969 Williams Highway.

- Noon-4 p.m. Dec. 29 at Umpqua Bank, 251 Pacific Ave., Glendale.

To make an appointment, visit redcrossblood.org or call 800-733-2767.



Congratulations
Katherine A. RN, IBCLC
for The DAISY Award

Submitted by a grateful patient.

"Katherine was so kind and encouraging to me in my effort to breastfeed. Although things were not going well at all, she never would allow me to give up hope. I was struggling desperately, not only with my emotions, but also with my surgical recovery.

As chance would have it, we were both at the same elementary school for an evening program the day after I had met with her. I smiled and said hello, she immediately asked me how it was going. Things were not going well at all; in my mind horrible. Having to supplement with formula made me feel like such a failure.

Right there in the elementary school gym, Katherine leaned over, took my hands, and looked me right in the eyes and said, "There is more to being a good mom than how you feed your baby." There was so much love and support in her words, such compassion and genuine care. I took those words with me the rest of that week and through the entire weekend, repeating them to myself, over and over and over.

I cannot thank Katherine enough for what she did for me; for her care and support. Having a lactation program is so valuable to this community and I for one, am so grateful that it was there when I needed it."

What is the DAISY Award?

The DAISY Award for Extraordinary Nurses is an international program that rewards and celebrates the clinical skills and the compassionate care given by nurses every day. Asante Three Rivers Medical Center is proud to be a DAISY Award Partner, recognizing one of our nurses with this special honor every three months.

To find out more about the program, including the list of partners, please go to daisyfoundation.org.

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Asante Physician Partners Welcomes Estin Yang, MD • General Surgery

Estin Yang, MD, provides advanced surgical care, including minimally invasive techniques. He offers surgery consultations to patients and families. Dr. Yang has special interests in hernia repairs, digestive disorders and complex cancer surgeries.

Asante Physician Partners-
General Surgery

537 SW Union Ave.
Grants Pass, OR 97527

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