



Meningitis outbreak kills over 140 in Nigeria

An outbreak of meningitis in several states of Nigeria has killed at least 140 people.

It has been reported over the last week in six states and has so far infected more than 1,000 people. Meningitis causes an acute inflammation of the outer layers of the brain and spinal cord.

The current outbreak is the worst in Nigeria since 2009 when it killed at least 156 people. (BBC)



Measles outbreak across Europe

Measles is spreading across Europe wherever immunisation coverage has dropped, the World Health Organization is warning.

The largest outbreaks are seen in Italy and Romania.

In the first month of this year, Italy reported more than 200 cases. Romania has reported more than 3,400 cases and 17 deaths since January 2016.

### Washington

People who received regular lifestyle counselling online were able to lower their blood pressure as much as a medication would, researchers said.

Their study involved 264 people with high blood pressure and an average age of 58.

The subjects' average blood pressure began at around 140/90 mmHg, meaning they had what is clinically known as stage 1 hypertension.

Most were already taking at least one drug to cut their blood pressure.

Patients enrolled through the website of the Heart and Stroke Association of Canada and were randomly assigned to either an e-counselling group or a control group.

Both groups received emails during the year-long trial, first weekly, then monthly.

Those in the e-counselling group

were "provided links to online multimedia and interactive tools to increase motivation and skills to begin and sustain a heart-healthy lifestyle," the study said.

"These included video clips featuring characters discussing their own high blood pressure diagnosis and efforts to make lifestyle changes, as well as tools for tracking diet and level of physical activity."

The control group saw more generic information about heart-healthy living.

By the end of the study period, the more engaging online content seemed to have had an effect, and patients in that group reduced their systolic blood pressure -- the higher number in a blood-pressure reading -- by 10 millimetres of mercury (mmHg).

That was a statistically significant difference compared to the control group, which saw a 6 mmHg

reduction.

"The electronic counselling intervention had an effect similar to that of adding an additional blood-pressure-lowering medication," said lead study author Robert Nolan, associate professor at the University of Toronto.

"We think this lifestyle counselling intervention can complement and optimise the effectiveness of medical therapy to reduce high blood pressure."

The study was released at American College of Cardiology's annual meeting in Washington. (AFP)



Web-based counselling lowers blood pressure as much as meds: study

# A natural pregnancy is in the works for cancer patients

Women who suffer from cancer will be able to have a natural pregnancy, thanks to a groundbreaking procedure that could be regularly performed in New York for the first time.

Fertility doctor George Kofinas has submitted a plan to the state Health Department to open a reproductive surgery centre specialising in ovarian-tissue harvesting and transplantation.

Chemotherapy causes ovarian damage, and women who undergo the treatment are typically left unable to get pregnant.

But under the procedure — akin to a skin graft — a slice of a woman's ovarian tissue that contains eggs is removed before chemo and stored and frozen.

When a woman is recovered from chemo and cancer free, the tissue is transplanted back into her ovary. Her reproductive function is restored, and she can have a natural pregnancy without in-vitro fertilization/egg donations.

"The demand for this service is projected to be very high. We have an ever-growing number of cancer survivors that come to us now and their ovaries have been completely destroyed by chemotherapy and other kinds of treatment and we can't help them unless we use donor eggs," Kofinas said in a March 9 presentation to a Health Department review panel.

"Providing these people with the service of storing their ovarian tissue for the time they become reproductively active is a unique service which we think will serve well in the metropolitan area, the state and the country." (New York Post)



PET VET

Dr. Rajani Rajesh

Seborrheic Dermatitis

Seborrhea, is also known as Seborrheic Dermatitis, a skin disease seen in dogs and rarely in cats. It is characterized by increased scale formation, occasionally excessive greasiness of the skin and hair coat, and often secondary inflammation and infection. With seborrhea, the sebaceous glands of the skin produce an excessive amount of sebum. So dogs will smell bad due to the buildup of oil on the skin and hair. Seborrhea is mostly seen as secondary condition to other diseases like allergies, endocrine disorders, dietary deficiencies, malabsorption disorders, parasites, and autoimmune disorders. There are two common forms of seborrhea: oily and dry. The majority of animals will have a combination of both oily and dry seborrhea.

It is seen more frequently in American Cocker Spaniels, English Springer Spaniels, Basset Hounds, West Highland White Terriers, Dachshunds, Labrador and Golden Retrievers, and German Shepherds.

Diagnostic techniques include a thorough physical examination; skin scrapings for parasites; fungal and bacterial cultures of the skin and hair; a fecal examination; and blood tests. Sometimes a biopsy of the skin may be necessary. A diagnosis of primary (inherited) seborrhea is made only once all other causes have been ruled out.

Treatment will mainly focus on controlling the condition. This may include using a combination of antibiotics (oral and topical), antifungals, and sometimes allergy medications,shampoos and conditioners to keep the skin clean and to soothe the animal. Your veterinarian will let you know which combination and frequency of bathing best works for your pet's condition.Fatty acids and vitamin/mineral supplements may help in cases of a deficiency or a condition that responds to certain vitamins and minerals in the diet.

With an appropriate dietary and supplement regimen for your dog will help control the condition and reduce the chances that a secondary infections develop.

(The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the policy or position of this newspaper.)