

Research

Reducing Nicotine in Cigarettes

880

Reducing the nicotine content of cigarettes to a minimally addictive level could decrease smoking prevalence by inhibiting the progression of smoking initiation to nicotine dependence. Hatsukami and colleagues randomized 1250 daily smokers to receive cigarettes with immediate vs gradual reductions of nicotine and found that the immediate reduction group had greater decreases in biomarkers of smoke exposure.

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Effect of Bundled Payments on Quality and Costs

892

The rationale for combining payments for all services related to a specific treatment, such as hip replacement, is to encourage coordination of care and reduce unnecessary utilization. In a randomized trial of hospital payment models for lower extremity joint replacement in 196 metropolitan statistical areas, Finkelstein and colleagues found that areas covered by a bundled payment model had a lower proportion of patient discharges to institutional postacute care but no difference in total spending per joint replacement episode. In an Editorial, Ryan suggests that studies of bundled payment programs will lead to further improvements in quality and cost control.

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Volume and Case Mix in a Bundled Payment Program

901

It has been suggested that voluntary bundled payment programs may prompt hospitals to "cherry pick" lower-risk patients to enhance quality and cost performance. Navathe and colleagues analyzed claims data for total of 1 717 243 Medicare beneficiaries who underwent lower extremity joint replacement and found that hospital participation in a bundled payment program was not associated with changes in procedure volume and was associated with minimal changes in case mix.

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Editor in Chief
Howard Bauchner, MD

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RECOMMENDATION STATEMENT

Screening for Syphilis Infection in Pregnant Women **911**

Congenital syphilis is associated with bone deformities, neurologic impairment, stillbirth, and neonatal death. This US Preventive Services Task Force statement recommends early screening for syphilis infection in all pregnant women.

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EVIDENCE REPORT

Outcomes of Syphilis Screening in Pregnancy **918**

The incidence of congenital syphilis in the United States has increased after reaching historic lows in the early 2000s. Lin and colleagues reviewed 7 studies and found that screening for syphilis infection in pregnant women is associated with a decreased incidence of congenital syphilis.

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Drugs for Tobacco Dependence **926**

Pharmacologic treatments can help nicotine-dependent patients quit smoking by relieving cravings and withdrawal symptoms. This Medical Letter on Drugs and Therapeutics discusses the efficacy and safety of nicotine replacement therapies, bupropion, and varenicline for the treatment of nicotine dependence.

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Screening for Syphilis in Pregnant Women



All pregnant women



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Editor's Audio Summary

Howard Bauchner, MD, summarizes and comments on this week's issue.

Author Audio Interview

JAMA Deputy Editor Edward Livingston, MD, interviews Charles Hicks, MD, from UC San Diego about the syphilis screening recommendations.

Visual Abstract

Effect of Immediate vs Gradual Reduction in Nicotine Content of Cigarettes on Biomarkers of Smoke Exposure: A Randomized Clinical Trial

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