



Party drug beats the blues

Treat Severe Depression When Orthodox Methods Fail

As Tetra Images/Corbis



SOARS: Nearly 30% of patients taking part in the study showed improvement that lasted at least three weeks

In 15% of the cases, patients took more than two months to relapse and some benefited for eight months.

Psychiatrist Dr Rupert McShane from Oxford University said: "We've seen remarkable changes in people who've had severe depression for many years that no other treatment has touched. It's very moving to witness."

"Patients often comment that the flow of their thinking seems suddenly freer. For some, even a brief experience of response helps them to realize that they can get better and this gives them hope," McShane said.

Ketamine, a horse tranquillizer, has become a popular recreational drug on the dance club scene. It is due to be upgraded by the government from Class C to B amid increasing concern over its physical and psychological

effects. There is evidence that users as young as 20 have had their bladders removed due to heavy consumption of the drug.

But the doses used in the patient trial were much lower than those on the street and side effects were minimal, even though the drug was injected into patients rather than swallowed.

Results from the first 28 patients treated with ketamine are reported in the *Journal of Psychopharmacology*. Either three or six infusions of up to 80mg of ketamine were administered during the three-week course of treatment.

The researchers conducted memory tests a few days later and patients reported

their mood symptoms daily via text or email. None suffered memory or bladder problems.

A total of 400 infusions have now been given to 45 patients on the programme.

"Intravenous ketamine is an inexpensive drug which has a dramatic, but often short-term, effect in some patients whose lives are blighted by chronic severe depression," said Dr McShane.

"We need to build up clinical experience with ketamine in a small number of carefully monitored patients. By trying different infusion regimes and adding other licensed drugs, we hope to find simple ways to prolong its dramatic effect," McShane added.

THE INDEPENDENT

Height of challenge: Jumping off Everest

Louisiana-based Joby Ogwyn is recognized for his prowess as an alpinist, a base jumper and a wing-suit pilot. Joby climbed Mt Kilimanjaro at 18 and by 26 he'd become the youngest person in the world to climb the Seven Summits. Come May 11 and Joby is set to take a death-defying jump off Mount Everest which will be captured live on Discovery channel. In an exclusive interview with Meenakshi Sinha, Joby shares his plans:

When and what made you come up with the idea to jump off Mount Everest?

Well, I had the idea of using my exper-



Moon's exact age revealed: 4.47 bn years

Kounteya Sinha | TNN

London: A team of planetary scientists has now calculated the exact age of the Moon. The team of researchers from France, Germany and the US has simulated the growth of the terrestrial planets (Mercury, Earth and Mars) from a disk of thousands of planetary building blocks orbiting the Sun.

By analysing the growth history of Earth-like planets from 259 such simulations, they have found the relationship between the

Simple blood test to predict sudden cardiac death risk

Kounteya Sinha | TNN

London: A simple blood test can now predict your risk of sudden cardiac death.

Samuel C Dudley, a lifespan researcher from the Cardiovascular Institute at Rhode Island in the US, has found that a simple blood test can predict a person's risk for Sudden Cardiac Death (SCD) enabling physicians to accurately assess a patient's need for an implantable cardiac defibrillator (ICD).

Currently risk assessments are determined by measuring the fraction of blood ejected from the heart in any one heartbeat, the ejection fraction. When the ejection fraction falls below 35%, a patient may benefit from an ICD. It is believed that approximately 60% of patients who receive defibrillators as a result of these assessments may not actually need one. This blood test will determine more accu-



As Johannes Mann/Corbis

PREVENT AN ATTACK

ately which patients need the defibrillator.

Sudden cardiac arrest is the most common cause of natural death in the US resulting in approximately 3,25,000 adult deaths in the country each year. The incidence rate is quite high in India - about 10% of all cardiac-related deaths are sudden while the mean age of the patients who die is lower than 60 years.

For full report, log on to www.timesofindia.com

Tobacco-tied stroke a giant killer in India

Kounteya Sinha | TNN

London: Over 1 in 10 deaths globally caused by Ischaemic Stroke (IS) due to tobacco was reported in India. The revelation is part of a study by Oxford University which was released on Friday.

Out of 187 countries, the number of people dying of stroke is third highest in India. Only China and Russia recorded higher number of IS deaths than India.

In 2010, 56,670 people died of IS in India or 11% of the total deaths, while the numbers in Russia were 62,110 or 12% of the global numbers. China was the country with the most IS deaths attributable to tobacco - 29% of the global figure - with 1,55,332 deaths.

Deaths from IS due to tobacco use in China, India and Russia together are higher than the total of other countries combined, according to the study. In 1990, China accounted for 26%, Russia for 10%, India for 7%, the US for 5% and Japan for 4% of the IS deaths caused by tobacco.

For the full report, log on to www.timesofindia.com

Study: Noah's Ark would have floated with 70,000 animals

Adam Withnall

The story of Noah may seem like an impossible legend, but scientists have calculated that the Ark could



As Blue Lantern Studio/Corbis

animals on board.

Student Benjamin Jordan, 21, from Bury St Edmunds, said: "Using the dimensions of the Ark and the density of the water, we were