

# In trial, beats the blues

## Ketamine Can When Orthodox Methods Fail

Ian Johnston

**K**etamine, the illegal dance club drug, has successfully been used to treat NHS patients suffering from serious depression.

Infusions of ketamine given to patients in an Oxford trial had a rapid beneficial effect on those who were not responding to more orthodox treatments. Some had been suffering unrelenting depression for many years despite various drugs and talking therapies.

Although many patients taking part in the trial at Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust relapsed within a day or two, almost 30% showed improvements lasting at least three weeks.

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*

# 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-



AP: Johannes Mann/Corbis

**PREVENT AN ATTACK**

rately 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](http://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](http://www.timesofindia.com)

## SHORT CUTS

### World's oldest weather report found in Egypt

An inscription on a 3,500-year-old stone block from Egypt may be the world's oldest weather report, scientists say. A new translation of a 40-line inscription on the 6-foot

## Challenge: Everest

### 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