

Breakspear Medical Bulletin

Issue 38

Spring 2014

Notes on how to improve your neuronal activity which may help fight Alzheimer's and dementia

You're listening to the radio and the 1970s hit song YMCA is playing. Suddenly during the chorus your arms lift to form the letters of the title. How do your arms know where to go?

Premovement neuronal activity are the 3 words used to describe the planning and initiating of body movement. This is just one type of neuronal activity.

Neuronal activity is the action of transmitting information throughout the body. The information is transmitted by the basic building blocks of the nervous system called neurones.



There are several different types of neurones that are responsible for different tasks in the body:

- Motor neurones transmit information from the brain to the body.
- Sensory neurones carry information from throughout the body to the brain.
- Interneurones

communicate information between different neurones in the body.

To maintain and organise neuronal activity, it is important to stimulate growth and survival

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Last edition of the Breakspear Medical Bulletin in its current form

As mentioned in the previous edition of the Breakspear Medical Bulletin, work is underway to rebrand Breakspear Medical Group and to launch an improved responsive website and an easier-to-use web shop in Spring 2015.

We have reviewed patients' and website-users' comments and hired a local creative company to design the new logo and update the website, which was originally designed in 2004.



You'll be pleased to know that the new website will automatically stretch or shrink to fit any screen size and still be readable, even if you are using a smartphone. The website has new sections and more FAQs, as well as planned stages for the future, which will provide more resources for patients to read about their conditions, recent medical studies and treatments available.

We look forward to sharing our new image with you soon!

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Lyme patient's story told in *Horse* magazine. See page 9.

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Breakspear Medical's scent-free survey results

Most common symptoms experienced by the scent-sensitive:

- dizziness, light-headedness (69%)
- headaches (65%)
- confusion (58%)
- upper respiratory symptoms (58%)
- fatigue (50%)
- difficulty with concentration (50%)
- weakness (46%)
- runny nose (46%)
- nausea (42%)
- anxiety (38%)
- watery eyes (38%)



patients, both online and using printed forms, which were available at the clinic.

With results like that, one wonders how the scent-sensitive can function in the workplace where scented products are everywhere and these people must be alert and perform a job.

Breakspear Medical is proud to provide a scent-free environment.

94% of the patients who responded to our scent-free survey knew that all patients and staff members are expected to be scent-free while at the clinic.

Of our scent-free survey respondents, 65% or more indicated that they suffer from dizziness, light-headedness and headaches when exposed to scented products.

50% or more of respondents also indicated that they suffer from upper respiratory symptoms, fatigue and difficulties with concentration.

These results came from our scent-free survey, which was completed by patients and non-

Our survey found that 93% of respondents did not know of any other UK business that has a scent-free policy.

During the coming year, we will continue to inform all current patients, new patients and their carers/interpreters/visitors of our scent-free policy and try to find additional ways of spreading the message. One recommendation that is being considered is that we send out a text reminder of the scent-free policy 24 hours before a patient's appointment.

It is very apparent that all the respondents felt very strongly that there should be consequences for those who may have a lingering scent while attending the clinic. 33% felt that if a patient was suspected of having used a scented product they should have their appointment cancelled and re-scheduled for another time after they have agreed to return scent-free. Many additional comments expressed that it would be very difficult to enforce such a policy.

Thank you to all the respondents to our scent-free survey.

Now that we have a compilation of opinions, experiences and suggestions from scent-sensitive people, we can work toward improving the clinic's scent-free environment further.

** Results are based on 27 completed questionnaires submitted between May and October 2014.*

Breakspear Medical Bulletin

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Breakspear Medical Bulletin is a private publication that we aim to produce 3 times annually. It is for the promotion of environmental medicine awareness and Breakspear Medical Group Ltd. This newsletter is not intended as advice on specific cases but as a forum of information researched and stored at Breakspear Medical Group. We urge readers to discuss the articles in this bulletin with their health-care practitioners. Unauthorised reproduction of this newsletter, or quotation except for comment or review, is illegal and punishable by law.

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Ask Dr Jean Monro

I am looking for a reliable test for Lyme disease. Is this something you can offer?

Lyme disease is the name used to describe a condition which is more commonly referred to in Europe as chronic borreliosis.

'Lyme' is the name of the American town where the condition was first recognised by Dr Wilhelm Burgdorfer. (See page 11 for a memoriam to Dr Burgdorfer.)

Chronic borreliosis is an illness which often starts with a bite from an infected tick. As the infected tick burrows its head into the victim's skin, the person may experience discomfort immediately at the point of contact, then a characteristic circular skin rash forms, called erythema migrans. This bull's-eye rash is a clear indication that the tick was infected and that the patient should start treatment immediately.

However, many tick-infected people do not have any clear indicators but may develop fever, headache, fatigue, pain in the muscles and joints and depression after the incubation period of about 1 - 2 weeks.

Unfortunately the many common symptoms lead to many cases of borreliosis being undiagnosed or misdiagnosed.

If left untreated or inadequately treated, these people may develop severe and chronic symptoms that affect other parts of the body, including the brain, nerves, eyes, joints and skin and occasionally cause heart conduction problems.

According to www.nhs.uk, "Public Health England estimates that there are 2,000 to 3,000 cases of Lyme disease in England and Wales each year..."

For patients who have spent time in woodland or heath areas where ticks are known to live, an NHS GP may recommend the enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay (ELISA) test and/or the Western Blot test.

Common symptoms of chronic borreliosis include:

- numbness
- pain
- weakness
- visual disturbances
- fever
- stiff neck
- severe headaches
- difficulties with concentration
- joint pain
- depression
- irritability
- sleep disorders
- nerve damage
- chronic fatigue
- and many others



The ELISA test is usually used as the first screening test. It is a blood test which looks for the antibodies produced by the immune system to kill *Borrelia burgdorferi* bacteria. The ELISA test is not considered 100% accurate as it can sometimes produce false-positive or false-negative results.

The Western Blot test is also a blood test, which looks at the proteins for antibodies used by the immune system to fight the bacterium *Borrelia burgdorferi*. Different laboratories use different methods and criteria to interpret the results, which means that false-positives and false-negatives may happen with this test, too.

At a Lyme Disease Forum in London in January 2015,

Dr Tim Brooks, Head of the Rare and Imported Pathogens Laboratory (RIPL) at Public Health England, stated that further tests are available to GPs upon request.

There are other tests such as Polymerase Chain Reaction test and Lymphocyte Transformation Test (LTT MELISA).

The absolute indicator of whether or not someone has borreliosis would be to find the organism in their blood or to find what is known as a plasmid. Plasmids are like the DNA of the Lyme organism; but there are 21 plasmids that are attached to the *Borrelia* which are not its own genetic DNA but a related DNA material.

At Breakspear Medical, after assessing a patient for symptoms and reviewing clinical history, if we suspect borreliosis, we would recommend tests at laboratories which have had very long-standing expertise in the assessment of borreliosis and have formal registration and accreditation. The validation for borreliosis tests is done comparatively with other laboratories and the techniques used must be approved. Using these accredited laboratories' tests, and often more than one type of test, in conjunction with a clinical history evaluation, we would be able to make a diagnosis and treatment recommendation.

Notes on how to improve neuronal activity

(Continued from page 1)

of developing neurones and the maintenance of mature ones. This can have an impact on the development and treatment of neurodegenerative (brain damaging) conditions such as Alzheimer's disease, which is an irreversible, progressive brain disease that destroys memory, thinking and the ability to carry out the simplest tasks of daily living.

There are various studies concluding that certain mushrooms, some antidepressants and a few nutritional supplements may all help with boosting neuronal activity.

One particular edible mushroom called *Hericium erinaceus* has been the focus of many studies for its neuroprotective effects. It is also known as Yamabushitake, lion's mane, sheep's head and bear's head.

A Japanese study published in 2009 concluded that *Hericium erinaceus* may be effective in improving mild cognitive impairment. The double-blind test was performed on 30 Japanese men and women who were 50 to 80 years-old and diagnosed with mild cognitive impairment. Half of the subjects took the dry powder supplement, while the other group received a placebo and, after termination of the supplement, the subjects were observed for a further 4 weeks. At weeks 8, 12 and 16 of the trial, the *Hericium erinaceus* group's scores on the cognitive function test increased with the duration of intake compared to the placebo group. At week 4 after the termination of the 16 weeks' intake, the scores decreased significantly.

Supplements that may help with neuronal activity:

- *Hericium* powder
- L-carnitine powder
- acetyl-L-carnitine capsules
- L-carnitine capsules

Another study found that *Hericium erinaceus* mushrooms increased production of nerve growth factor (NGF). NGF is a small secreted

protein which is important for the growth, maintenance and survival of certain target neurones. NGF also functions as a signalling molecule.

NGF has been used experimentally to treat

Alzheimer's disease and the degeneration of nerves in the extremities caused by diabetes.

It has also been shown that antidepressants can directly stimulate brain growth factors, particularly the antidepressant amitriptyline. It was found that amitriptyline increases the NGF receptor and hence this is part of the explanation for amitriptyline being used for chronic pain such as migraine headaches and the nerve damage caused by diabetes.

The nutritional supplement acetyl-L-carnitine has been shown to increase NGF activity as much as 100-fold and the related compound, acetyl carnitine arginate, works by mimicking the action of NGF itself.

The amino acid carnitine has several functions but of primary importance is its role in energy metabolism. Carnitine transports fatty acids into the mitochondria, the power house of the cell, to be broken down by a process known as β -oxidation; it is used for making energy.

Exercise has also been shown to benefit brain function, memory, learning and prevention of neurodegenerative diseases.

Because of the rise in the occurrences of neurodegenerative diseases, it would seem wise to help in the growth, development and maintenance of neurones in the body by the variety of means available.

Pill used for ALS may help prevent senior moments

According to an article in the Daily Telegraph 23 December 2014, a study published in the Journal of Neuroscience concluded that the drug riluzole, which is used for patients with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), or motor neurone disease, may help with memory lapses.

The researchers studied the effects of the drug on rats, which showed riluzole helps to control glutamate, a chemical which helps enable neurones communicate, but in excess causes damage at the synapses, the point at which they connect.

Appropriate diet & exercise recommended for chronic fatigue

Shortly after publication of Issue 37 of the Breakspear Medical Bulletin, a comment was posted on our blogsite, expressing concern about the recommendation of exercise for recovering chronic fatigue patients. This collaborative article addresses concerns raised by the blogger.

On page 3, Issue 37, of the Breakspear Medical Bulletin, there is an article about exploring additional ways to improve the recovery from chronic fatigue apart from using diet and nutritional supplementation as the foundation.

It is important to mention that there is no single universally accepted definition for chronic fatigue. This means that a clinician will depend on their orientation, training and understanding of the mechanisms involved in the illness when making a diagnosis and this leads to an umbrella term being used for a wide range of patients with a variety of symptoms.

For example, one Breakspear Medical patient was quite an accomplished runner and currently is able to run only 2-3 miles instead of a standard marathon of 26 miles. The decline in ability occurred over a very short period of time and continued. In this individual's opinion, they were experiencing chronic fatigue. At the other end of the spectrum, there are those patients who are not able to work, have very poor concentration and memory or are bed-bound.

To address this broad spectrum of chronic fatigue, Breakspear Medical uses clinical assessment, patient and family history, and objective markers, one of which is assessing the patient's current level of adenosine triphosphate (ATP) and their ability to generate it, in an attempt to evaluate the severity of the fatigue. The possibility of pollutants or infections should be investigated as well as the testing for and treating of food sensitivities.

Once the severity of fatigue is determined, then an individualised treatment programme is recommended. A treatment programme will usually include changes in diet with nutritional supplementation and graded exercise therapy (GET), or some form thereof, but it is not appropriate for everyone. Individuals require

individualised treatment by experienced clinicians.

In 2004 Edmonds *et al* published "Exercise therapy for chronic fatigue syndrome", and found "there is encouraging evidence that some patients may benefit from exercise therapy and no evidence that exercise therapy may worsen outcomes on average." Their work was published by the well-established and internationally respected *Cochrane Collaboration*.

The UK National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines on the management of CFS/ME state, "unsuccessful general exercise programmes,

perhaps undertaken independently by the patient, or under brief advice from professionals not adequately trained in the use of GET, are often begun at a high, unachievable level, with an inappropriately rapid rate of progression, or without adequate professional supervision or support. An unstructured and poorly monitored or progressed exercise programme can cause significant symptom exacerbation, and can arguably make CFS/ME worse".

There are various accepted tools used to measure quality of exercise, such as actometers, which assess motion, accelerometers and the doubly-labelled water (DLW) technique. These tools are measuring movement/energy/performance but are not providing information on the benefits of exercise to the body, such as the increase of brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF). There are published studies on fatigue patients that conclude that exercise quality measured by these tools does not improve over time, however, what needs to be further researched is the benefit of appropriate levels of exercise to the patient's body. While their performance may not have improved, their wellbeing may have.

It is important that anyone suffering from chronic fatigue receive individualised care to ensure that an appropriate programme of recovery is undertaken. At Breakspear Medical, we believe appropriate exercise can help many fatigue patients as well as patients with other conditions such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's.

It is important that anyone suffering from chronic fatigue receive individualised care to ensure that an appropriate programme of recovery is undertaken.



New thoughts on organic food

Not too long ago it would have been challenging to find a supply of every day, fresh, organic food in mainstream shops and even more difficult to find healthy, organic ready meals.

The use of the word “organic” has changed from meaning to be “derived from carbon-based materials” (plants or animals) to refer to the methods that the farmers use to grow and process food products.

Organic now refers to a method of food production which does not use conventional chemical fertilizers and pesticides, encourages soil and water conservation, and does not allow genetically modified crops or growth hormones to be used in animals.

Understandably, environmental groups that are opposed to pesticides and chemical fertilizers contribute to advocating that organic food is superior.

One of the largest organic certification organisations is the Soil Association. Founded in 1946, it certifies four-fifths of organic produce and campaigns for organic farming.

According to the Soil Association website, “Organic land in the UK now accounts for nearly 4% of agricultural land” and about three-quarters of organic food is currently sold through supermarkets.

An international team of experts led by Newcastle University has shown that organic crops are up to 60% higher in a number of key antioxidants than conventionally grown ones and lower in toxic heavy metals and pesticides.

Research shows that with conventional farming, there is a build-up of chemicals in the soil, which, after many years, can lead to stagnated yields.

In addition to soil management, the Soil Association’s organic standards cover animal living conditions, food quality, the use of antibiotics and hormones, as well as transport and slaughter, giving organically farmed animals very high welfare standards.

According to an article in the Daily Telegraph 27 December 2014, “Yet even as the case for organic produce strengthens, its popularity in Britain is declining.” The article explains that it is



Animals certified as organic must have outdoor access (when weather and ground conditions permit).

in part because shoppers are seeking out Fairtrade produce and/or local produce, which has a reduced impact on the environment because of the reduction of transport. Meanwhile demand for organic still rises in other European countries.

In a recent ITV television series, Alan Titchmarsh unlocked the secrets of the Queen’s organic gardens at Buckingham Palace. The gardens’ success relies on the

family’s enthusiasm for organic cultivation.

In 1990, the Prince of Wales set up Duchy Originals to promote organic food and farming. However in 2009, after 2 years of profits slumping during the recession, the Duchy Originals premium brand food company received a multimillion pound investment from Waitrose to originate, manufacture, distribute and sell Duchy products in the UK.

Organic farming does have recognised advantages in developing countries. It has been reported that affordable organic ways of farming can increase yields. For example, organic farming tends to use waste recycling, more careful water management and less loss of biodiversity, which leads to better yields particularly in times of drought. For these farmers, expensive chemicals are not required, saving them money and resulting in the food produced being chemical-free, and the surrounding water systems cleaner.

While the results of some comparative studies of the nutritional benefits of organic crops versus standard commercially produced food may be mixed, if you are trying to eat the best foods possible to keep or restore your health, organic food may be the best option. Organic food guidelines do not allow it to be genetically modified and it contains as little chemicals, hormones, antibiotics, additives or pesticides as possible, as well as having a smaller environmental footprint attached to it than conventionally grown food. Reducing the load of chemicals on your body and the environment reduces the load on your immune system.

Recommended recipe

Alina Tierney, Nutritional Therapist

You may already have read about the healthy benefits of chocolate recently in newspapers and magazines. Or perhaps you have heard Dr Jean Monro or me recommending chocolate as a medicinal treat.

Chocolate is well known for its antioxidant properties, but, more recently, it has been lauded for its potential benefits of preventing cognitive decline. However, choosing the right chocolate is not easy!

Many chocolate manufacturers are using an alkalisation process, called Dutching, to eliminate the bitterness found naturally in chocolate and to enhance the appearance of the cocoa and its texture. The downside of this process is that the health benefits are then decreased, as it causes a significant loss of flavonols (antioxidants).

There are some of the big brands on the market that offer organic dark chocolate which do not use the Dutching process. However, most of the chocolates available contain sugar, which is best avoided.

As many people find 100% chocolate too bitter and hard to enjoy, I have provided this recipe. The chocolates that I use are: Willy's 100% Indonesian or Venezuelan Black Chocolate.

Although this recipe does include dates, which have a high sugar content, they are a good source of minerals, vitamins and dietary fibre. Also, they contain a higher percentage of protein than other type of fruits and have a high ratio of glucose to fructose, which enables the body to absorb the fructose from dates more efficiently. And there is only half a date per serving!

Nutritional Data

per chocolate ball:

Energy	102 calories (kcal)
Fat	7 g
Carbohydrate	8 g
Sugar	5 g
Protein	2 g
Sodium	1 g



These little morsels are gluten-, sugar- and dairy-free and packed with the benefits of nuts and chocolate.

Chocolate balls

Makes approximately 15

Ingredients

150 grams cashew nuts
8 medium pitted dates
80-90 grams 100% chocolate
1 tablespoon coconut oil (room temperature)
splash of vanilla essence

Method

1. In a mug, cover dates with hot water and leave to soak for at least 10 minutes.
2. Coarsely grind the cashew nuts in a food processor or nut grinder.
3. Purée the soaked dates (with the water in which they were soaked), coconut oil and vanilla essence.
4. Melt the chocolate in a bain marie*. To melt the chocolate this way, put the chocolate in a heatproof bowl, such as a Pyrex® bowl. Sit the bowl over a pan of gently simmering water and allow the chocolate to melt, stirring occasionally.
5. Once the chocolate has melted, remove the bowl from the pan, leave it to cool for 1 minute and then mix the melted chocolate with the date purée.
6. Gradually add the ground cashew nuts and fold until all the ingredients are well mixed.
7. Using your hands, roll mixture into approximately 15 small bite-size balls.
8. Put the balls in the fridge to set for 20 minutes and they are ready to eat. (But the longer you leave them the better they taste!)

* While it may be tempting to melt the chocolate in a microwave, there is a higher risk of burning the chocolate and it is thought that chocolate retains more of its nutritional benefits when gently melted in a bain marie.

Potentially toxic ingredients of scented laundry products

If you have visited the clinic at Breakspear Medical, you will know that we have a scent-free policy in place. In fact, Breakspear Medical recommends that everyone use scent-free products all the time.

Before coming to Breakspear Medical, patients, visitors and all staff are expected to use scent-free laundry powder on all clothes worn at the clinic. This requires special care to be taken because most of today's laundry detergents are strongly scented. Because laundry products are not eaten, manufacturers are not required to list the various natural and synthetic chemical compounds which make up the product and this means that potentially toxic chemicals may be contained.

The following is extracted from a fact sheet based on the scientific opinions on "Fragrance allergens in cosmetic products" adopted in June 2012 by the Independent European Scientific Committee on Consumer Safety: "Based on the review available and on multiple cases of allergy reported by dermatologists, the European Scientific Committee on Consumer Safety (SCCS) identified 82 substances (54 chemicals and 28 natural extracts) that can be categorised as '*established contact allergens*' in humans..."

The SCCS states that problems can be caused by fragrance ingredients when they are in contact with skin, causing redness, rashes and/or eczema to some people's skin. In addition, some fragrance ingredients can be chemically transformed on the skin in the presence of air, sunlight or biochemical reactions inside the body. Studies are underway to determine if there are safe levels of these allergens for allergy sufferers and a review of ways to provide allergy sufferers with appropriate information so that they can avoid harmful exposure.

According to safecosmetics.org, along with allergens, perfumed products may also contain phthalates (a class of chemicals which have been linked to hormone disruption, which may be affecting foetal development, fertility and obesity), neurotoxins (chemicals that are toxic to

the brain) and synthetic musk compounds (man-made aroma chemicals which imitate the natural animal musk). Traces of synthetic musk have been found in domestic and industrial wastewater.



Breakspear Medical recommends that everyone use scent-free products all the time.

In 2010, a study, conducted at the University of Washington and published in the journal *Environmental Impact*

Assessment Review, discovered that 25 commonly used scented products emit an average of 17 chemicals each. Of the 133 different chemicals detected, nearly a quarter are classified as toxic or hazardous under (American) federal law. More than a third of the products emitted at least 1 chemical classified as probably carcinogenic (causing cancer) by the US Environmental Protection Agency.

The study looked at fragranced products, such as laundry detergent, fabric softener, dryer sheets and air fresheners in solid, spray and oil form. In the laboratory, each product was put in an isolated space at room temperature and the surrounding air analysed for volatile organic compounds (VOCs). The most common emissions included limonene, a compound with a citrus scent; alpha-pinene and beta-pinene, compounds with a pine scent; ethanol; and acetone, a solvent found in nail polish remover. Because product formulations are confidential, it was not possible to determine whether a chemical came from the product base, the fragrance added to the product, or both.

According to lead author Anne Steinemann PhD, "The products emitted more than 420 chemicals, collectively, but virtually none of them were disclosed to consumers, anywhere." Steinemann suggests using simpler options such as cleaning with vinegar and baking soda, opening windows for ventilation, and using products without any fragrance.

In 2011, Steinemann published an article in *Air Quality, Atmosphere and Health*, which shows that air vented from machines using the top-

(Continued on page 9)

Lyme patient Melissa Smith tells her story to Horse magazine

Horse magazine March 2015 contains the story of a Breakspear Medical patient and her struggle with Lyme disease.

The title of the article reads, "It's like something out of a horror story".

Joanne Bednall tells the story of 37-year-old dressage rider and trainer Melissa Smith's battle with Lyme disease in a 5-page article in Horse magazine.

It starts with how Melissa was bitten by a tick and scoured the internet to find more information about tick bites. As she did not experience a bull's-eye rash, which is the standard indicator of a tick infected with Lyme disease, she forgot all about the bite.

But 3 weeks later, her health deteriorated. Fatigue ensued, strange circular patches appeared on her legs, she started suffering from heart palpitations, arm numbness, horrendous pain in her neck and chest, was struggling to breathe and had moments of considering dialling 999 emergency.

Melissa said, "I was in complete shock. One minute I was out competing, the next I was lying in a hospital bed."

After undergoing a variety of tests and receiving confusing results, by a strange twist of fate, Melissa met someone at a wedding who had been diagnosed with Lyme disease and this led Melissa to Dr Jean Monro at Breakspear Medical.

In addition to her being tested and treated for Lyme disease, it became apparent that the disease had claimed a second victim, her young horse Ares.



Lyme disease has had a devastating effect on dressage rider and trainer Melisa Smith's health and one of her horses, too.

Reproduced by kind permission of Horse.



Melissa said, "I was in complete shock. One minute I was out competing, the next I was lying in a hospital bed."

To read the full article, you may purchase a back issue of Horse magazine from:
www.myhobbystore.co.uk

(Continued from page 8)

selling scented liquid laundry detergent and scented dryer sheets contains hazardous chemicals, including 2 (acetaldehyde and benzene) that are classified as carcinogens, for which the Environmental Protection Agency has established no safe exposure level.

The studies met strong resistance from industry representatives, each claiming that their product had levels that were not known to cause any problems.

We recommend...



Did you know...?



Quinoa isn't necessarily safe for coeliacs

Coeliac disease: an autoimmune disorder in which the ingestion of gluten leads to damage in the small intestine and which presents with a variety of symptoms.

Gluten is naturally occurring protein found in most grains.

According to celiac.org, those people with coeliac disease, which is manageable only by a strict gluten-free diet, should probably avoid quinoa, which has been

recommended by doctors and nutritionists for years as a gluten-free alternative.

Recent laboratory tests suggest that some strains of quinoa contain proteins so similar to gluten that they may activate the immune system of coeliacs in the same way that gluten would.

Originally from South America, quinoa has been considered a pseudo-cereal and a good source of protein, iron and calcium.



Fast food waste on the rise

According to www.KeepBritainTidy.org, "The top 3 litter types in England have remained consistent over the past decade. Smokers' materials are the most common, confectionery packs are second and non-alcoholic drinks-related litter is the third most common."

However, since 2004/5, there has been an increase in the prevalence of fast food-related litter. It is now the fourth most common litter type in England and increasing at a rate far greater than the current top 3 litter types.

Fast food-related litter includes hot food takeaway containers, coffee shop cups and wrappers, and any pre-prepared foods.

The increase in fast food-related litter may be for a number of reasons, but it would seem to be directly connected to the increasing availability of fast foods, which are linked to developing diabetes, cardiovascular disease and a host of other chronic problems, which are also on the rise in the UK population.

2-3%
rise in
asthma
cases

Asthma rises in new green homes

According to an article in the Sunday Times 21 December 2014, it would seem that increasing

energy efficiency of new homes may be putting residents at a greater risk of developing asthma.

A published Exeter University Medical School study of 900 properties in Cornwall suggests that a person's chance of suffering from asthma goes up steadily in line with the energy-efficiency rating of their home. The findings suggest that for every unit in a property's standard assessment procedure (SAP) rating, there is a 2-3% rise in the likelihood of its occupants seeking medical treatment for asthma.

Follow the old wives' tale: "Scarf up to keep away the colds!"

In early January 2015, various newspapers reported on a Yale University, USA, study which concluded that it is possible that if one keeps one's nose warm when outside, there is less chance of catching a cold.



There may be a combination of reasons why keeping one's scarf over one's nose may help prevent colds.

As one breathes in cold air, it lowers the temperature in the nose and throat, which provides a better environment for the cold virus to replicate. It is also known that the cells in airways do not fight off viruses as well in lower temperatures.

By putting a scarf over the nose and mouth, one is re-breathing warmer air and therefore providing a less virus-friendly environment.

Also, breathing through a scarf can reduce contact with infected passers-by.

While the researchers studied the cells of mice, it is known that similar mechanisms operate in mice and humans. The full abstract of the study was published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

His research contributions are published in more than 225 papers and books on a wide range of investigations of fevers, plagues and other bacterial and viral diseases.

Introducing Dr Daud Mohamed

In January 2015, Dr Daud Mohamed joined the Breakspear Medical clinical team.

Dr Mohamed studied medicine at the world's oldest state university, Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II (translated: Naples Frederick II University of Study) located in Naples, Italy.

After qualifying, Dr Mohamed completed his residency in infectious diseases, which has given him GMC registration as a specialist in this field.

This interest lead him to practise at the Cotugno Hospital for Infectious Diseases, where he diagnosed and treated unselected emergency infectious cases including meningitis, encephalitis, malaria, tuberculosis and hepatitis



Dr Daud Mohamed

A, B and C. He also practised for 2 years at the Bandadir Hospital, Mogadishu, Somalia.

After moving to the UK, Dr Mohamed became a Resident Medical Officer in Orthopaedics (medical specialty devoted to bones, joints, ligaments, tendons and other musculoskeletal systems) at the Orthopaedic and Spine Specialist Hospital in Peterborough.

Dr Mohamed is fluent in Italian and English, while his native tongue is Somali and he knows some Arabic, too.

When not at work, Dr Mohamed enjoys spending time with his children and watching football.

Please join us in welcoming Dr Mohamed to the Breakspear Medical team.

Bulletin board

Breakspear Medical staff attend patient-led Lyme Disease Forum

On 19 January 2015, a Lyme Disease Forum was held at the House of Commons where concerned Lyme patients and scientists met to discuss concerns about "the dire state of diagnosis and treatment of Lyme Borreliosis and tick-borne diseases in Britain."

Breakspear Medical staff members Dr Jean Monro, Dr Daud Mohamed, Anne Derham, and Alister Monro attended the conference.

Speakers included The Countess of Mar, Dr Armin Schwarzbach, Dr Chris Newton, Chris Moore of Nordic Laboratories and Dr Tim Brooks, Head of the Rare and Imported Pathogens Laboratory (RIPL) at Public Health England.

Changes in Accounts

In September 2014, long-time Breakspear Medical Accounts clerk Janis Davies retired. Before leaving, she took the opportunity to say how much she had enjoyed working with everyone.

Also in September 2014, student intern Sales Ledger Clerk Tom Read joined the Accounts team.



Visiting Students from Thailand

In early January 2015, 11 first-year medical students and teaching doctors from Mae Fah Luang University in Thailand visited Breakspear Medical, as part of an educational collaborative.

The lecturers and students enjoyed a full day of talks given by Breakspear Medical staff: Dr Jean Monro, Professor Basant Puri, Dr Mussadiq Shah, Dr Peter Julu and Ron Leon.

The Mae Fah Luang University is an autonomous public university, which was established to meet the educational needs of the people of the north of Thailand.

Breakspear Medical is rebranding

The launch of our new logo and website is set for Spring 2015. Along with new signs inside and out and a new website and web shop, there will be new letterhead, name badges and business cards.

We hope you like our new look!