

‘You can never have too much of a good thing’

Many of you may be surprised to receive an August issue of ‘Rhinology’. I hope this will be a pleasant surprise, as it will shortly be followed by our normal September edition. The decision to do this was primarily motivated by the desire to reduce the increasing backlog of papers awaiting publication. Although we have increased the number of papers published significantly in recent years and have adopted a very rigorous review process, accepting only the best papers in their fields, the increasing number and quality of submissions makes this a continual challenge. We have been posting e-versions of accepted papers on the website for some time (www.rhinologyjournal.com) but authors are naturally impatient to see their work in print so we agreed a one-off ‘summer’ edition to expedite matters.

Those of you who kindly completed the electronic questionnaire will know that we have been considering whether we should go entirely electronic. However, for the time being, we will continue to produce a hard copy but will keep the situation under review.

This ‘extraordinary’ issue highlights as ever, the wide spectrum of rhinology from anatomy and physiology to basic and clinical research through a wide range of pathologies including allergy, inflammation, infection and neoplasia.

Despite the obvious importance of the nose in sleep-related problems, articles on this subject have been rather sparse in the rhinology literature so the review by Bhik Kotecha is timely ⁽¹⁾. This area also highlights the need for a multidisciplinary approach and emphasises the concept of the ‘united airways’, also explored from a therapeutic perspective by Möller and colleagues ⁽²⁾. The efficient delivery of topical medication is obviously an important factor in its effectiveness and this study builds on previous work from the same group ⁽³⁾. A wide range of newer delivery systems is being investigated such as the OptiNose ^(4,5) or Kurve (controlled particle dispersion)⁽⁶⁾ devices and innovative formulation technology using nanoparticles, mucoadhesives, various gels and cyclodextrins are being utilised ⁽⁷⁾. Eluting stents also offer the promise of improved healing by delivering antibiotics, steroids and other agents such as mitomycin C directly to difficult sites such as the frontal recess and other sinus ostia ^(8,9). Furthermore, the nose is increasingly being used for the delivery of other drugs, ranging from hormone replacement therapy and growth hormone to insulin and anti-migraine medication (sumatriptan). The ability to directly reach neuronal tissue in the olfactory niche and thence the brain makes this a very attractive proposition.

The olfactory system remains an area of considerable interest especially with the increasing recognition of hyposmia

as the presenting symptom in neurodegenerative disorders. Normative data in the older population is therefore fundamental to any attempts at screening ⁽¹⁰⁾ as is the standardisation of tests such as olfactory thresholds ⁽¹¹⁾. A reduction in the activation volume of olfactory brain structures and odour intensity perception has been shown with functional MRI in older subjects ⁽¹²⁾. However, a meta-analysis of 43 papers on Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s diseases versus controls, showed significant defects in odour identification, recognition and detection thresholds over and above that which might be expected due to ageing so interest has focussed on olfaction as a possible method of screening for these neurodegenerative disorders ⁽¹³⁾. Olfactory loss is of course common in many rhinologic conditions and is known to have a significant effect on quality of life ⁽¹⁴⁻¹⁶⁾. Better assessment tools and some innovative treatments are resulting in a less nihilistic approach by clinicians to these problems ⁽¹⁷⁻²²⁾.

And finally, this issue carries important information on a number of Fellowships and research prizes available through the journal and the European Rhinologic Society, two of which are directly linked to the next ERS meeting in Toulouse, France (July 17-21, 2012). This congress promises to be an exciting and stimulating experience, both scientifically and socially. The charm, climate and gastronomic excellence of the south west of France are sure to stimulate the senses, in particular the olfactory and gustatory senses of all rhinologists – so make sure the date is in your diaries now!

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