
Focus on Health

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John R. Woodward, M.D.
Gynecologic Endocrinology

Aldosterone

From the journal *CIRCULATION*: Human heart failure may be associated with the balance between DHEA and the hormone aldosterone which is produced in the adrenal glands but also in other tissues (such as the heart and skin).

An article from the University of Colorado dated 10 April 2009 also associates aldosterone with pulmonary hypertension and shows that the drug Spironolactone, which blocks aldosterone, can be used to lower aldosterone blood levels in doses ranging up to 400 mgm daily.

As part of the professional services I feel should be provided by me to my patients, screening of the voluminous medical literature has become more and more important. The information in this newsletter is derived from periodicals and books which I have read and whose information I have consolidated. Perhaps you have seen an item that I have not included in this list or have not seen myself. If so, feel free to bring it to my attention.

Rise of Thyroid Cancer

Thyroid cancer is in the news because, with overall rates of cancer falling, thyroid cancer rates are rising by about 6% per year. Researchers know one big reason: the many medical scans that Americans have. But that is not the whole story. The good news is that overall death rates are not rising. Radiation exposure in childhood is a red flag to check for thyroid cancer. Tumors less than 1 cm should be monitored for six months. Anything larger should be biopsied.

What is DHEA?

DHEA is not a hormone, but it is an important hormone precursor in humans made and secreted by the adrenal glands but in other tissues as well (principally skin). Its production in men is lifelong in the testicles which helps blockade prostate cancer. DHEA may permit long term prostate cancer control or cure in 90% of localized cases. This article comes from Laval University in Quebec City, Canada.

Compression Stockings

The risk of deep vein thrombosis after stroke was studied in the CLOTS trial. The use of thigh-length graduated compression stockings to reduce risk of deep vein thrombosis does not prove to be clinically useful. The stockings do seem to help in patients undergoing surgery.

Swine Flu Vaccination

Vaccination against H1N1 influenza (Swine Flu) is currently recommended as long as one is sure that there is no mercury in the vaccine. Batches are being made that do contain mercury because of their longer shelf life. Be careful what you are given.

John R. Woodward, M.D.
7777 Forest Lane, Suite A338
Dallas, Texas 75230
(972) 566-7870

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