INDICATIONS

Rocket Man—Er, Fish

Putting aside efforts to cure real diseases (cancer? AIDS?), researchers from the University of Stuttgart-Hohenheim's Department of Wasting Time and Money, in Germany, launched 60 baby cichlid fish into space to decode the causes of motion sickness, Reuters reports. The fish will take off from the Esrange Space Centre in Sweden, above the Arctic Circle, and journey 160 miles into the atmosphere, where they will become weightless for 6 minutes. Cameras will record the fish's actions. After the fish land, the researchers will examine the subjects' otolith organs, which sense gravity and acceleration. "Fish, when they get motion sick, begin tumbling around, swimming in circles, and miss their balance," a researchers told the news outlet. Hey, that happens to us sometimes, too, though under *slightly* different circumstances. Said one space traveler: "All this science, I don't understand. It's just my job, 5 days a week. I'm a Rocket Man." Um, right.

Top Gun, Chemically Enhanced

You've heard of airplane pilots hitting the bar before takeoff. Now for the newest trend: Israeli fighter pilots popping Cialis tablets, supposedly to improve breathing at high altitudes. The Israeli military's weekly magazine, Bamahaneh, recently presented an interview with a retired military general who just happened to have a few pills on hand and conducted a single-subject study of the drug's effects on breathing on Mount Kilimanjaro. A secondhand report in Reuters quoted an unnamed air force officer saying the study's results justify further "testing" of the pills. But an air force spokeswoman said the type of oxygen starvation mountaineers experience is different from that in pilots, and there were no plans to issue the drug to members of the air force. In possibly related news, French customs officials intercepted a shipment of 224,000 fake Viagra and Cialis anti-impotence pills in December, at Paris's Roissy airport. Said a pilot, who remained anonymous for fear of retribution: "Oui, oui! Eet is zee only way to fly. As they say: We have liftoff!"

Brain Surgery, Take One … Action!

In the most compelling story yet to refute the benefits of medical tourism, a Singapore newspaper says students in an immunology class at Nanyang Polytechnic medical school spend half a semester watching television shows like "House" and movies like "Outbreak" in lieu of lectures. Student Constance Chen, aged 18 years, told the newspaper: "As youngsters, we are into TV, and it's great fun to watch ['House'] rather than have regular lectures." As future patients, we feel that no med student ought to be having "great fun" while learning how to perform a colonoscopy, for instance. Neither does a future doctor calling herself a "youngster" really make us want to hop up onto the examining table. Professor Anand Krishnasamy, who has been supplementing his course with the shows for 2 years, said, "I have a collection of movies and programs related to the subject and show them to the students whenever the main themes are connected to what I am teaching in class." Tara Reid, he added, looked totally hot in "Dr. T. and the Women."

—Denise Napoli