INDICATIONS

Mighty and Mutated

Forget doping. The next generation of athletic enhancement was reported by researchers at Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, where overexpression of the PEPCK-C gene in the skeletal muscle tissue of mice gave subjects the ability to run a stunning 6 km at a speed of 20 m/min on a rodent treadmill, a feat the Bureau of Indications has not been able to accomplish since ninth grade, despite the dual advantages of being a biped and owning an expensive gym membership. The PEPCK-C gene normally is involved with gluconeogenesis in the liver and kidney cortex and in glyceroneogenesis in liver and adipose tissue. The researchers, whose finding were published in the Journal of Biological Chemistry, wrote that, "the three PEPCK-C^{mus} mice tested ate, on a body weight basis, an average of 60% more food than controls. Despite eating more, 18-month-old PEPCK-C^{mus} mice weighed less and had dramatically less body fat." If this all sounds too good to be true, take it from Whiskers, who completed the annual Iron Mouse triathlon this year in a record 8 hours flat: "This record is not tainted at all. At all. Period." He then lifted his treadmill over his head and threw it to the opposite end of the cage in anger.

fMRI Study: Giuliani in '08

In anticipation of the 2008 presidential election, researchers recently performed functional magnetic resonance imaging on the brains of 20 likely voters as they viewed videos and pictures of different 2008 presidential candidates. In a letter to the New York Times, investigators reported that initial activity in the amygdala at the sight of a photo of Mitt Romney indicated anxiety in some of the 20 subjects, but that activity died down once voters watched videos of the candidate giving a stump speech, showing that voters may grow more comfortable with Mitt over time. In another finding, a video of Fred Thompson promoted activity in the superior temporal sulcus and the inferior frontal cortex, "both areas involved in empathy," reported the researchers. And finally, voters' brains exhibited greater activity in the right amygdala, right anterior temporal pole, and hypothalamus—areas typically associated with erotic arousal—to photos of Rudy Giuliani dressed as a woman than in response to pictures of Hillary Clinton. "Our results reveal some voter impressions on which this election may well turn," wrote the investigators. "A pair of red high heels could clinch the nomination for Giuliani." The researchers conceded that their investigation was somewhat compromised by the inclusion of photos of little-known Republican candidate Ron Paul, whom voters routinely mistook for Mr. Rogers.

FDA: Fun Is Toxic. Happy Holidays!

In a recently issued, presumably taxpayer-funded pamphlet, "Food Safety Tips for Healthy Holidays," the Food and Drug Administration cautioned consumers against the many perils of the holiday season. "Parties, family dinners, and other gatherings where food is served are all part of the holiday cheer. But the merriment can change to misery if food makes you or others ill." Indeed. Among the FDA's suggestions for a healthy, happy holiday: "Don't eat uncooked cookie dough." "Make sure oysters in oyster dressing are thoroughly cooked." And "when making your own eggnog or other recipe calling for raw eggs, use pasteurized shell eggs, liquid or frozen pasteurized egg products, or powdered egg whites." But enough brandy kills the bacteria, right? Hopefully, Santa heeds the agency's warning to wash thoroughly before dunking those thoroughly cooked cookies into milk—the reindeer stall is a breeding ground for germs.

—Denise Napoli

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