

HEALTH & WELLNESS

Healthbeat

Girl's twin is found inside her stomach

ATHENS, Greece (AP) — A 9-year-old girl who went to a hospital in central Greece suffering from stomach pains was found to be carrying her embryonic twin, doctors said last Thursday.

Doctors at Larissa General Hospital examined the girl and surgically removed a growth they later discovered was an embryo more than two inches long.

"They could see on the right side that her belly was swollen, but they couldn't suspect that this tumor would hide an embryo," hospital director Iakovos Brouskelis said.

The girl has made a full recovery, he said. Andreas Markou, head of the hospital's pediatric department, said the embryo was a formed fetus with a head, hair and eyes, but no brain or umbilical cord.

Markou said cases where one of a set of twins absorbs the other in the womb occurs in one of 500,000 live births.

The girl's family did not want to be identified, hospital officials said.

Grant will help local fight against substance abuse

The North Carolina Coalition Initiative (NCCI) Coordinating Center of Wake Forest University School of Medicine has received a two-year, \$800,000 funding initiative from the N.C. General Assembly to support local substance abuse coalitions — a first in state history.

The NCCI is grant funded by the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse Services (DMHDDAS). Direction and technical assistance is provided by the NCCI Coordinating Center. The NCCI's mission is to reduce substance abuse in communities by building the capacity of community coalitions to implement evidence-based, population-level prevention strategies.

"We are excited about this new initiative, which will help local communities deal with the serious issue of substance abuse," said Mark Wolfson, Ph.D., NCCI's executive director.

Wolfson said the NCCI Coordinating Center has awarded eight grants to community programs across the state. Each will receive up to \$57,500 for a 14-month period to build community capacity to address substance abuse.

NCCI coalitions will receive extensive training and technical assistance to help them build their capacity, Wolfson said. Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA), based in Washington, D.C., is a partner in this effort and will provide a total of three weeks of intensive training over the next six months to help prepare the coalitions for the work ahead.

Group protests spitting term

DALLAS (AP) — A gay-rights group is protesting a 35-year prison sentence given to an HIV-positive man who was convicted of spitting on a police officer, and public health officials say the risk of contracting the AIDS virus from saliva is extremely low.

Prosecutors convinced a jury this week that the man's spit constituted a deadly weapon, making the long prison term appropriate. Willie Campbell spit into the eye and open mouth of a Dallas police officer while he was being arrested for public intoxication in 2006, the officer testified.

Campbell, 42, had been in prison twice before, making him a habitual offender subject to a sentence of at least 25 years.

The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says no one has ever contracted the AIDS virus from spit.

Bebe Anderson, the HIV projects director at Lambda Legal, a gay-rights group, said the verdict could create wrong impressions about how HIV is transmitted.

District Attorney Craig Watkins said "it was clear that the defendant intended to cause serious bodily injury."

More cancer patients having whole breast removed

(AP) — A growing number of women with early stage breast cancer seem to be choosing to have the whole breast removed instead of just the cancerous lump, doctors are reporting.

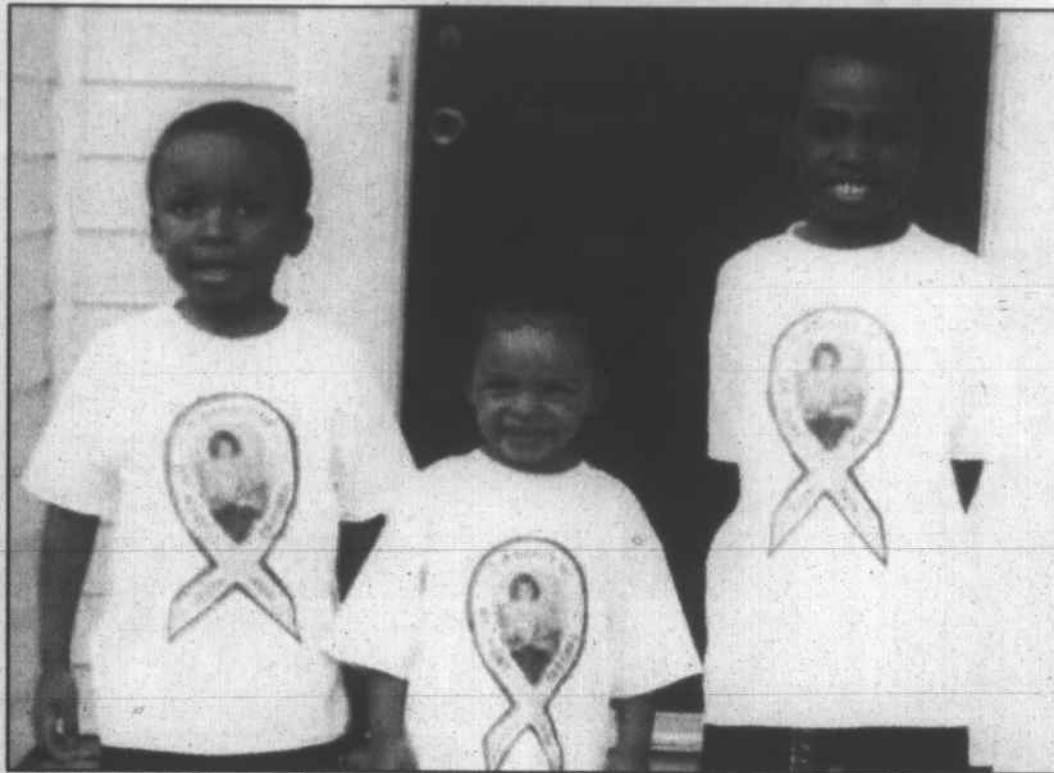
Mastectomies were standard treatment until 1990, when studies showed that women whose cancers were small and confined to the breast did just as well if they had less radical surgery followed by radiation. That set a trend of more women choosing breast-conserving treatment.

Now, a study of about 5,500 women at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn., shows that mastectomies are on the rise. Doctors say there are signs this is happening elsewhere around the country, too.

The study was released last Thursday by the American Society of Clinical Oncology and will be presented at the group's annual meeting later this month.

In the Mayo Clinic study, about 45 percent of breast cancer patients chose mastectomies in 1997. That declined to only 30 percent in 2003, then started to rise. By 2006, 43 percent were opting for the more radical treatment.

FAMILY WALKS FOR CURE TO REMEMBER ONE OF THEIR OWN



Young walkers Gah'ques Ligons, Tasiana Andrews and Gjerria Ligons Jr.

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

A family used the May 3 Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure event at Old Salem as a way to honor a loved one who passed away from breast cancer.

The family of the late Alphonie "Peaches" Perkins Gwyn, who died March 6, 2006, took part in the annual event, which has raised tens of thousands of dollars for breast cancer research. Gwyn's family members are no strangers to the walk; they have taken part each year since she passed away.

This year, about 15 family members walked the three-mile trek, including men, women, boys and girls of various ages. The youngest participant was two-year-old Tasiana Andrews, the great niece of Gwyn and the daughter of Terry and Stacy Andrews, walked the whole three-miles, non-stop. Other walkers were amazed by the little girl's determination and cheered her along as she made her way to the finish line.

Each year, the family wears matching t-shirts to honor Gwyn. Armita Perkins Ingram, Gwyn's sister, designed this year's shirts.

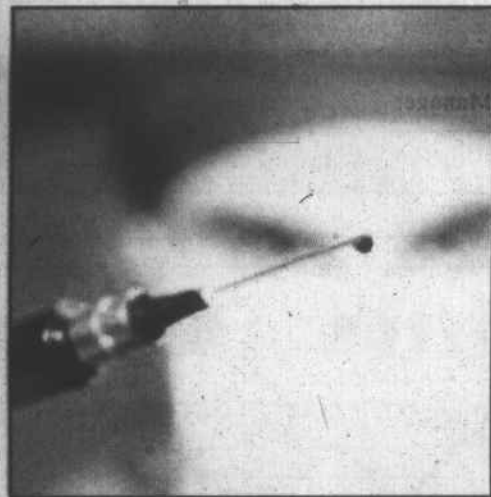
The family said the walk was both joyous and memorable, and they vow to continue to take part in the event as a tribute to their beloved "Peaches."

'Clumped' blood may contribute to sickle cell pain

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

It's long been known that patients with sickle cell disease have malformed, "sickle-shaped" red blood cells — which are normally disc-shaped — that can cause sudden painful episodes when they block small blood vessels.

Now, researchers at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Medicine have shown that blood from sick-



le cell patients also contains clumps, or aggregates, of red and white blood cells that may contribute to the blockages.

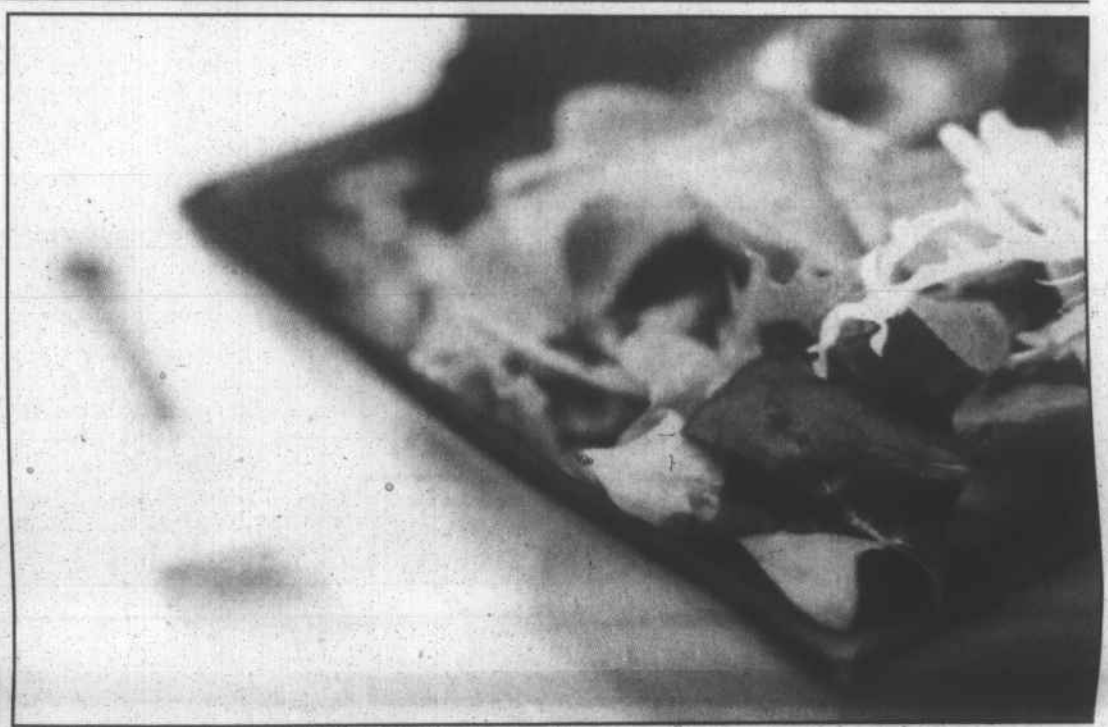
The study, published on-line April 18 in the British Journal of Haematology, marks the first time that aggregates made up of red blood cells and white blood cells have been found in whole blood from sickle cell patients. The study also shows how the red and white blood cells adhere to one another: the interaction is mediated by a particular protein, integrin alpha four beta one.

First author Dr. Julia E. Brittain, a research assistant professor in the medical school's department of biochemistry and biophysics, said further study could lead to new treatments for the disease. "If the blockages are caused by these chunks of aggregates that are circulating in the blood, and we know how the aggregates are sticking together, we potentially could design drugs to disrupt the aggregates so that they pass through the blood vessel more freely," she said.

Normal red blood cells don't interact with white blood cells. But Brittain first showed in lab tests with isolated cells that young red blood cells (reticulocytes) would interact with white blood cells and form aggregates with them. Then, she looked for such clumps in blood samples from 14 people with sickle cell disease. All the patient samples studied had clumps, though some had only a few, while others had thousands. She didn't see clumps in samples from patients without sickle cell disease.

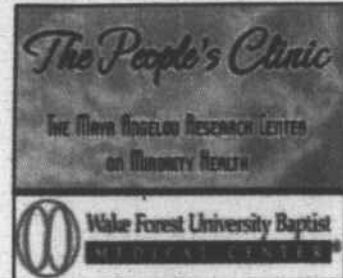
Brittain said other researchers may have disrupted the aggregates because blood collection tubes usually contain an anticoagulant that ties up calcium, which often plays a role in cell adhesion. She saw the aggregates only when she used an anticoagulant that doesn't remove calcium.

Brittain and her colleagues plan further study of the phenomenon, including the conditions that might determine the number of aggregates in the blood, and whether they are affected by the drug hydroxurea, which is commonly used to treat sickle cell disease.



Nutrition & Diabetes

This article was previously run in The Chronicle by the Maya Angelou Research Center on Minority Health. It is being re-run to correspond with the Center's current series on diabetes.



Diabetes is a growing problem in our country. According to the latest statistics, nearly 21 million people have diabetes, many of whom don't even know they have it. Diabetes is the sixth leading cause of death in the United States. Rates of the most common form of diabetes, known as Type 2 diabetes, have risen dramatically in the last twenty years. Unfortunately, African Americans are not only more likely to develop Type 2 diabetes, but they are also more likely to suffer from some of the

health problems associated with diabetes, such as amputations, kidney disease and blindness. Heart disease, the leading cause of death among people with diabetes, also has a big impact in African American communities.

Recent research has shown that working with a health care provider team to control blood sugar, cholesterol and blood pressure, is very important in successfully managing diabetes

and avoiding these serious complications. According to the American Diabetes Association (ADA), diet can play a big role in this management strategy. The ADA recommends a number of tips:

- Limiting the amount of calories, fat and saturated fat in your diet is one key. "Limiting" these foods means eating lean meats, fish or poultry, choosing reduced fat snacks, and cutting back on added fats such as butter or mayonnaise.

- Limit the portion sizes of your meals, especially when eating out, is very important. Eating foods that are high in fiber also helps keep the blood sugar down and gives you that feeling of "fullness" so you can

See Diabetes on A11

School system smoking out smokers

Ban in Winston-Salem/Forsyth County schools coming in July

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools will soon be a tobacco-free school system.

A new policy that prohibits the use of tobacco products by anyone on any property owned or leased by the school system will go into effect July 1.

Though students have been prohibited from using tobacco products in schools for many years, staff and visitors have been permitted to use tobacco products in designated outdoor areas. Last year, the N.C. General Assembly passed the Tobacco Free School Law, which forbids the use of tobacco products by anyone at any time on school property.

Staff and visitors will notice the following policy changes:

- Tobacco products will not be allowed to be used at any time by staff, visitors, contractors or students.

- The policy will apply to all school-owned or school leased property, including buildings, grounds, buses, fleet cars, ball fields and other facilities.

- Any property owned by the school system will be tobacco-free.

Any other property used or leased for school-sponsored or school-related events will become 100 percent tobacco-free for the duration of those events.

The school system's employee benefits program will offer free services and products to help employees quit their tobacco use. These include the North Carolina Quitline, which offers free quit assistance seven days a week, 8 a.m. to midnight. Employees can access the service online at <http://www.quitnownc.org>. Professional quit counselors are trained to help tobacco users work through the process.

Free nicotine replacement patches are available for employees who subscribe to the N.C. State Health Plan. The plan will waive the co-payment for generic, over-the-counter nicotine patches for employees if they use the Quitline or receive smoking-cessation counseling from their health-care provider.