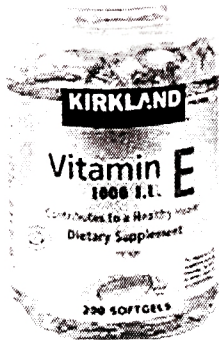


Med Update by Jennifer Clara Tang

Vitamin E: Not a Panacea



Source: www.manekineko.us

A McMaster study published in the March 16, 2005 issue of the *Journal of the American Medical Association* announced a surprising discovery: administering vitamin E supplements does not prevent cancer or major cardiovascular events in people with diabetes or cardiovascular conditions (HOPE, 2005). It is known that both cancer and atherosclerosis, a condition that may cause cardiovascular events, are linked with oxidative stress (damage caused by free oxygen radicals). Based on this knowledge, researchers had previously hypothesized that vitamin E, an anti-oxidant, would counter the effect of the free radicals thus reducing the risk of these conditions ("No benefit..."; 2005). The results of this study also indicate that long-term vitamin E supplementation may also contribute to heart failure (specifically, decreased function of the left ventricle). The study was a randomized, double-blind placebo

controlled branch of the HOPE (Heart Outcomes Prevention Evaluation) trial and involved over 9,500 patients aged 55 years and older who had diabetes mellitus or vascular disease. One of the hallmarks of the study was its long duration. Stage one of the study was completed between 1993 and 1999. The investigators decided to extend the length of the study to 2003 in order to gather conclusive results.

The original journal article, entitled "Effects of Long-term Vitamin E Supplementation on Cardiovascular Events and Cancer" may be accessed at <http://jama.ama-assn.org/cgi/content/full/293/11/1338>

Med Update by Jennifer Clara Tang

Peace Through Health Conference @ McMaster



Health Through Knowledge

PHRI

Source: www.humanities.mcmaster.ca

M McMaster will be hosting the second annual Peace Through Health conference from May 6-8, 2005. The conference, "Peace Through Health: Learning from Action" invites students, educators, media and health and peace professionals to engage in a weekend of speakers, small group discussion, case-study focused learning and a hike through Cootes' Paradise. Fostering communication and education about Peace Through Health initiatives will be the focus of this conference. Peace Through Health is the study of how "health interventions in actual and potential war zones may contribute to peace" (Peace..., 2005).

Examples of Peace Through Health in action may be seen through humanitarian ceasefire, and through nurturing social and personal healing in war zones. Conference speakers include McMaster faculty Dr. Joanna Santa Barbara, Dr. Salim Yusuf, Dr. Vic Neufeld, Dr. Graeme MacQueen as well as representatives of the World Health Organization and the journal *Lancet* (McMaster..., 2005).

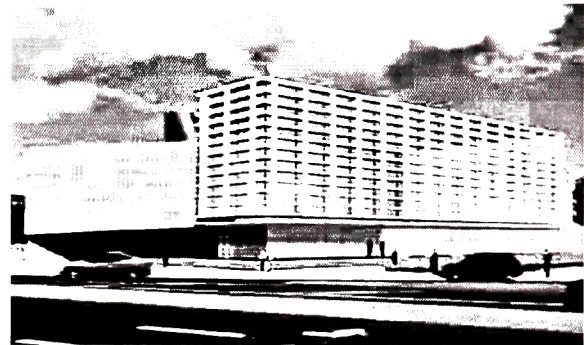
For more information visit www.humanities.mcmaster.ca/peace-health

Med Update by Jaron Chong

New Bioengineering Graduate Program Announced

McMaster recently announced a new interdisciplinary graduate program in bioengineering. As a collaborative effort between McMaster's Faculty of Health Sciences and the Faculty of Engineering, this comes as the most recent development in a long line of efforts by the university to bridge the two fields. In 2002, the university created a five-year undergraduate program in Chemical Engineering and Bioengineering and was quickly followed up the Electrical and Biomedical Engineering degree. In 2004, MDA, makers of the Canadarm, and Bell University Laboratories, each contributed \$450,000 for the purposes of establishing a medical robotics and integrated systems lab. Pending approval by the Ontario Council on Graduate Studies, McMaster will soon have bioengineering opportunities at all levels of post-secondary education. Both the Masters and Ph.D programs are accepting approximately 50 students from Health/Life Sciences and Engineering backgrounds for the 2005/2006 academic year. To complement the program, a new building for the McMaster School of Biomedical Engineering (MSBE) is also being planned. With research foci including tissue engineering, medical robotics, and regenerative medicine, the coming years hold great promise for collaboration and discovery.

More information is available on the program's website at <http://msbe.mcmaster.ca>.



Artist's concept of proposed new School of Biomedical Engineering and School for Engineering Practice (msbe.mcmaster.ca)

Med Update by Jaron Chong

McMaster University Family Medicine Residency Program Expanded



Source: www.mayo.edu

Twenty-two new family medicine residency positions, on top of a previous 41 positions, have been opened at the Michael G. DeGroot School of Medicine, McMaster University. Working in cooperation with the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care, this expansion represents a provincial investment of \$10 million. \$5 million will go directly into funding 141 new residency positions while the other \$5 million is tagged to fund the construction of additional medical clinics at Queen's University and the University of Western Ontario. These two-year residency positions commence in 2006 and are expected to yield 337 family doctors by 2008, thereby increasing primary care accessibility for hundreds of thousands more Ontarians currently without a family physician. Traditionally, more McMaster medical graduates have gone into family medicine than the national average. Last year, 46% of McMaster medical graduates went into family medicine as opposed to 33% in other medical colleges throughout Canada. This expansion represents a solid investment in addressing both Ontario's health care needs for today and for years to come.