

IS IT BROKE?: “Health-Care Industry, Heal Thyself” was the title of a recent *Wall Street Journal* commentary by Eric Johnson, a professor at Dartmouth’s Tuck School of Business. Safeguarding patient information in today’s digital world is as hard as controlling health-care costs, he posited.



MEDIA MENTIONS: DMS & DHMC IN THE NEWS

Among the people and programs coming in for prominent media coverage in recent months was Dr. **H. Gilbert Welch**, a professor of medicine at DMS. Welch, an expert on cancer screening and patient outcomes,



was quoted by the *New York Times* regarding a study he conducted on mammography. “The presumption often is that anyone who has had cancer detected has survived because of the test, but that’s not true,” Dr. Welch said. “In fact . . . in screen-detected breast and prostate cancer, survivors are more likely to have been overdiagnosed than actually helped by the test.” And the *Huffington Post* noted that “Welch calls overdiagnosis, the process of detecting medical abnormalities that will never harm patients’ health, ‘the biggest problem posed by modern medicine.’”

“Hospitals need to do a far better job keeping patients from ending up back in the hospital soon after they are sent home,” reported the *Boston Globe*. “As the state gets ready to cut payments to 24 Massachusetts hospitals with higher-than-average rates of preventable readmissions, a new study by the Dartmouth Atlas Project concludes that hospitals have made little improvement on the problem since 2005. . . . ‘For a long-standing and well-recognized problem, not much progress has been made,’ said Dr.



David Goodman, the lead author and a Dartmouth professor. . . . Executives at the Massachusetts Hospital Association object to the pay cut, saying hospitals can’t always control when a patient comes back. . . . But the state and

Dartmouth researchers said high readmission rates are often a sign of poor discharge planning and a failure to coordinate patients’ care with primary care doctors.”

“Consumption of even the slightest amount of alcohol could have an impact on gut health,” noted United Press International. “Dr. **Scott Gabbard** and colleagues at Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center and the Mayo Clinic said just one drink per day for women—two for men—could lead to small intestinal bacterial overgrowth and subsequently cause gastrointestinal symptoms such as bloating, gas, abdominal pain, constipation, and diarrhea. . . .



‘These findings are significant because we now know that any bit of alcohol consumption—not just the amount consumed by alcoholics—is a strong predictor of a positive lactulose hydrogen breath testing and small intestinal bacterial overgrowth,’” Gabbard said.

Dr. **Patricia Watson**, an assistant professor of psychiatry at DMS and a senior educational consultant at the DMS-affiliated National Center for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, appeared on National Public Radio’s *Talk of the Nation* to discuss the psychological effects of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. “From what we saw after 9/11, providers were actually extraordinarily well-prepared in some ways,” she said. “Because it was a large urban community, you had people who were trauma experts there who were willing to go out and do mass trainings, to teach the most updated techniques on how to treat traumatic stress and loss and traumatic grief. And the national community responded with an outpouring

of support and funding to bring people across the nation together to figure out, you know, how do we do the best to treat people.”

“Tumor formation may require fewer steps to get started than previously thought, according to a new study that shows how chromosome instability (CIN) and DNA damage—two tumorigenesis triggers typically considered independent phenomena—can arise from a single defect,” reported the *Scientist*. “This paper really provides a link between the mechanism behind CIN and the mechanism underlying chromosome damage,” said Dartmouth biochemist **Duane Compton**, Ph.D., who was not involved in the research. Prior to this study, most researchers were not investigating how these two phenomena might be related,” he added.”



Odyssey, a science magazine for teens, featured DMS microbiologist **George O’Toole**, Ph.D. “Something slimy is hiding between your teeth, growing on your fish tank, and coating rocks in a nearby pond. . . . But don’t freak out—this ‘slime’ is a part of natural life,” *Odyssey* noted. “George O’Toole . . . is trying to find out more about how these slimy colonies form and how they can be defeated. ‘For reasons we don’t understand very well,’” O’Toole said, “‘when bacteria grow on a surface in a group, they become up to 1,000 times more resistant to antibiotics than . . . when they are living as individual cells.’”



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