

Halloween Supernewsletter

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Please forward to those who Like Halloween

Dear Goblins and Ghosts

This is the annual Halloween Newsletter. At the end of October of each year is Halloween.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Halloween> . It is an unusual holiday as now it has become a second class citizen to the big holidays, at the end of the year, Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Years.

Over the last decade Halloween has changed and gone global, with Halloween parties in Tokyo, Moscow and Paris.

What I wanted to discuss with you is a serious concern, the effect of Halloween globalization on health. It is the global spread of Halloween could be potentially as dangerous Diabetes, H1N1 or tooth decay. There are obvious health consequences of Halloween, children wear scary outfits, with Bat Man masks that may restrict their breathing and little elastic band digging into the back of their heads. It is not clear that these outfits are compliant with OSHA, or other government authorities. Then of course this bizarre concept of kids going door to door looking for treats.

Kids are not looking for healthy foods, e.g. apples, oranges or dates.

Instead they are looking for CHOCOLATE, candies and McDonald's coupons. I have noticed that with the expansion of Halloween world wide there has also been an expansion of childhood obesity. This is purely an ecologic finding, but it leads to the straight forward testable hypothesis that Halloween and Halloween is the Epidemiologist's dream holiday. We epidemiologists live off of death. If there were no death, there would be no epidemiology, and we would have no jobs. Many of my friends deal with 1000s of deaths. Walt Willett from Harvard and the nurses' study, is indeed a major player in death, as many of the nurses have died.

Epidemiologists are the best people in the world in the science of death, counting dead bodies, and making sense of death on a population basis.

Funeral directors, pathologists, and grave diggers, CSI, in their lifetime never work with as many bodies as we do in a week. We need to take our skills to understand the epidemiology of Halloween.

Zombie Flesh Eating Epidemiology

I could find no epidemiologic literature on zombies.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zombie>). Halloween is a big night for Zombies as they all come out, kill people and eat their brains and flesh.

Clearly Zombies are a major risk factor for death, yet to my knowledge there has never been a zombie case control study, or prospective study.

We do not even know the prevalence or incidence of Zombies, nor natural history. Moreover there is no Zombie Institute at the NIH. Just in terms of anecdotal information (e.g. the Night of the living dead) the Zombies appear to be very lethal. At is amazing that there are over 24000 articles and millions of dollars investigating flesh eating bacteria, but almost no money spent for flesh eating Zombies, this must stop. I think there may even be some active discrimination against the epidemiology study of Zombies. Raj Bhopal has never had a epidemiology of Zombie sessions at the IEA meetings. We are not alone; our basic research friends have never produced a simian or rat model of zombism.

Zombie epidemiology is new paradigm. However, there are several major methodological issues that we epidemiologists need to resolve. How do we calculate a mortality rate of zombies die twice? Also in our Cox Regression model people are either classified as alive (0) or dead (1). What do we do with a zombie who is "living dead". It is a puzzle.

Perhaps we should code Zombies as .5. Also, is it legal to censor someone twice from a life table? We can make a brand new field, and hopefully will see some RFPs in this area.

It appears that there is an infectious etiology to becoming a Zombie as if you are bitten by a Zombie, you may become a Zombie. One could speculate further that this is a "bite" is transmitting prions. Also, it has to be related to hygiene as you cannot be buried for years without becoming a little dirty. Psychiatric Epidemiology plays a role as Zombies appear to have mood disorder.

It is also disappointing that no one has followed up on a very important lead. We know that with Creutzfeldt–Jakob disease there appears to be transmitted as the result of eating brains, and similarly potted head eating in the Shetland Islands is associated with MS. The favorite food of Zombies is human brains, yet no one to my knowledge has pursued this hypothesis.

"Great minds Taste Alike" (Zombie quote)

We should start Zombie Epidemiology in Pittsburgh. My city started the identification of the infestation of Zombie epidemiology. This all began the Monroeville Mall in 1968 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Night_of_the_Living_Dead It was here, that the classic 1970s movie was filmed "The Night of the Living Dead" which started the zombie epidemic. If you come we can arrange personal tours to show you the birth place and the first death place and second death place for Zombies. See below the trailer for the movie (do not look at this if you are afraid of Zombies) http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pEISu_ECJGM

Primary Prevention

As we know so little about prevention of death by zombies, it is difficult to give advice as to how to avoid having your brain eaten. One piece of prevention advice is exercise. Every Zombie I have seen is a very slow walker. With a little exercise who should easily be able to out run them.

Also, if they start to attack, make sure you in front of the slowest person who looks like a nerd with a big brain.

As we all finish our articles, clearly more work is needed in this area.

Halloween Sandy

In the past few days Hurricane Sandy has raised its ugly head in the Atlanta and set out to attack the Eastern part of the United States.

Walter Hayes has been keeping track of the hurricane hitting the United States and prepared a wonderful lecture about Sandy and her Hurricane Friends. He has been continuously updating the hurricane as we have found more and more information. Our lecture of the week is thus Sandy and

friends: <http://www.pitt.edu/~super1/lecture/lec48091/index.htm>

"Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity" (WHO) Best Regards,

Ron, Faina, Eugene, Francois, Nicholas, Gil, Mita, Ismail, Eric, Kawkab, Vint, Ali, Olga