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Doctors use video games as therapy

United Press International
 While some condemn their quarter-gobbling proliferation, doctors and educators now are finding therapeutic uses for electronic video games. Those mesmerizing beeps and flashes are being used to rehabilitate brain-injured patients. Psychologists are finding the games can improve memory, reaction times and problem-solving abilities. Learning-disabled children have also benefited from the multi-sensory stimulation provided by the machines as kids' motor accuracy and eye-hand coordination improved greatly, one study showed.

Warped



By Scott McCullough

Drugs and sun dangerous combination, study says

United Press International
INDIANAPOLIS — Like the Lord High Executioner in The Mikado, Roger Maickel has a little list: 375 chemicals and drugs that can trigger severe sunburn in people who never suffered it before. "Even sunscreen agents can have the opposite effect and subject you to increased sunburn," said Maickel, Purdue University's top pharmacy expert.

People taking a drug for a chronic ailment can be especially vulnerable, suddenly becoming allergic to sunshine instead of tolerating it well, he said. Even aspirin used routinely to fight arthritis pain can aggravate sunburn, Maickel said. There is no way to issue a general warning because the problem can crop up with so many drugs. Even the habitual sunbather suddenly may be stricken as the years of exposure mount up. "It's like bee stings," he said. "You can get 10 bee stings and you're OK and the 11th one sets up a shock reaction so strong it may require hospitalization." Maickel said the most dangerous time of day for sunbathing is noon to 4 p.m., when the ultraviolet dosage is highest. He said to ask your pharmacist about the compatibility of medicines with sun exposures. He said pharmacists are often a much better source of information than physicians, because pharmacists routinely check out just such matters. The drugs to watch out for in combination with sun exposure, he said, include: Anti-inflammatories, used for arthritis; antibiotics, especially sulfa drugs; oral hypoglycemics, such as Oritase and Diabinese, used by diabetics; many drugs used for mental ailments — including anti-depressants and anti-psychotics; Also, anti-convulsants, used for controlling epilepsy, especially phenytoin, sold most often under the Dilantin brand name, some diuretics for high blood pressure; and some oral contraceptives. He said severe exposure result in second- or third-degree burns, although most sunburns are first-degree. Physicians generally recommend treating first-degree burns with cold water or compresses plus a bandage, frequently changed, but no ointment, grease, nonprescription medicines or home remedies. Second-degree burns require similar treatment, plus elevation of the burned limbs. Blister should be left unbroken. Third-degree burns make affected area white or charred. Clothes stuck to the burn should be left alone and no ice, water, anything else applied. The worst burns require medical attention. Call an ambulance. If the victim has breathing problems, elevate the head and shoulders. If medical care is more than two hours away, Maickel said, adult should be given the juices such as apple juice or a glass of a weak solution made by dissolving a level teaspoon salt and half a level teaspoon baking soda in a quart of water. The victim should be allowed to sip it very slowly every 15 minutes. It should not be given if the victim is unconscious or vomiting, he said.

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