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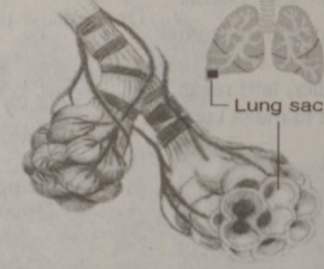
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Study: Treatment for preemies' lung problems might damage their brain

By Janet McConaughy
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Lung disease in premature babies

A steroid used to treat respiratory distress syndrome in premature babies can lead to disabilities, according to a study released Wednesday.



Respiratory distress syndrome
An infant's lungs with respiratory distress syndrome does not make enough of a surfactant, a chemical which reduces a liquid's tendency to stick to itself. This keeps the inside surfaces of the lung's tiny air sacs — and of the lung itself — from sticking to each other when air is exhaled.

A common steroid treatment for premature babies with lung problems can damage their brains and slow their growth, a first long-term study of the practice found.

The bodies of many premature babies do not yet make a chemical that keeps the lungs from collapsing when the infants exhale. Respirators keep them breathing but can stretch the fragile lung. This causes inflammation and other damage, contributing to chronic lung disease.

To prevent chronic lung disease, doctors often give the babies the steroid dexamethasone to reduce inflammation.

To check its long-term safety, doctors at six hospitals in Taiwan looked at 146 school-age children who had been born prematurely and put on breathing machines. The children had been given dexamethasone or dummy shots for four weeks as infants.

As babies, 15 percent of those given dexamethasone developed chronic lung disease compared with 28 percent of those who got placebos.

But eight years later, the children who had been on the steroid were shorter than the others by about an inch and half, they were less coordinated and they had lower IQ scores. Dr. Tsu-Fuh Yeh of Chi Medical University in Taiwan reported in Thursday's *New England Journal of Medicine*.

"Dexamethasone is widely used. Some doctors use dexamethasone like water. Not only in North America — in Europe, in Asia," he said.

Yeh said the long-term risks clearly outweigh the benefits. Although many people had known there might be long-term effects, he said, "because nobody proved it, they still use it. Our paper is quite conclusive."

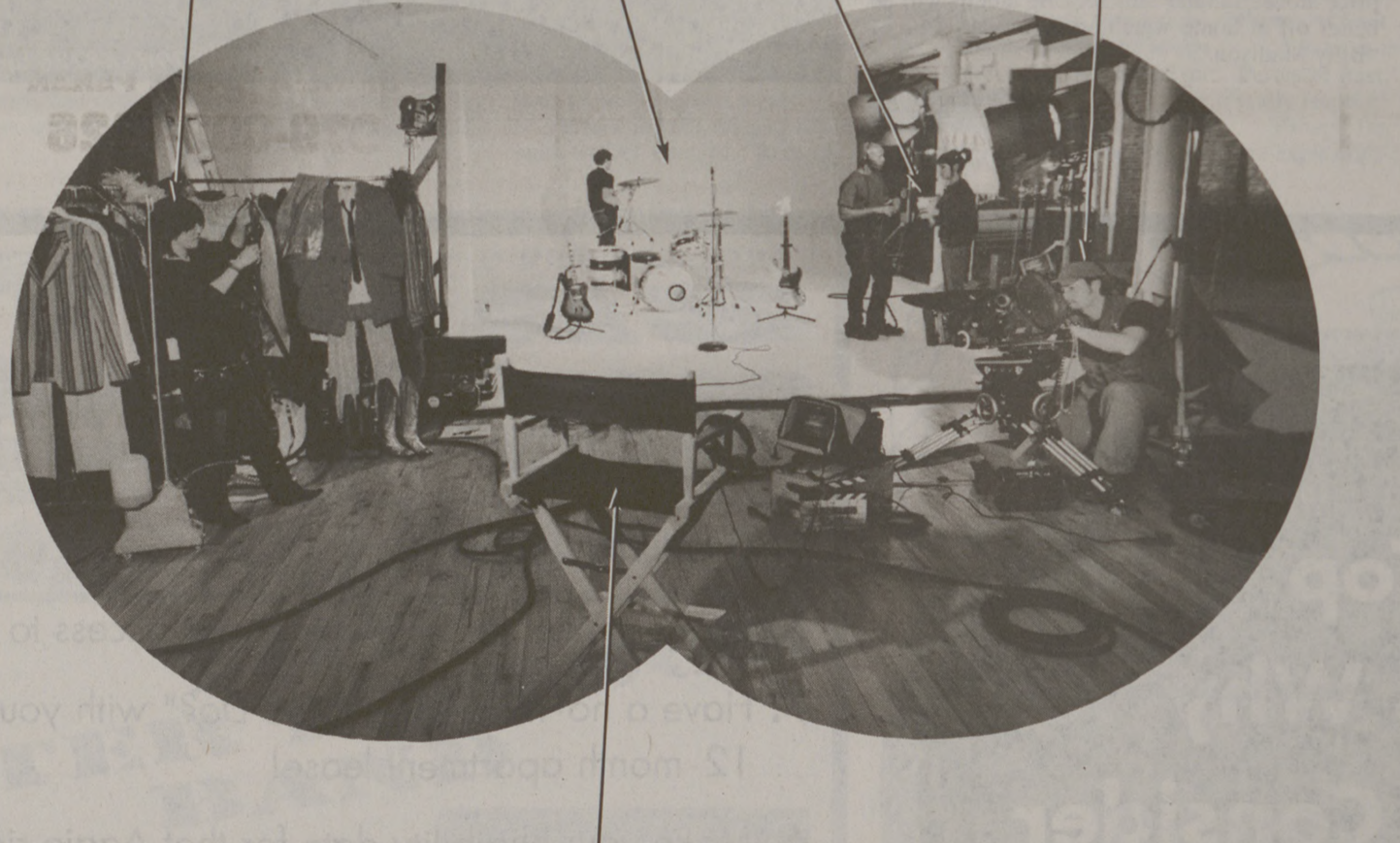
All premature babies are at risk for brain damage. But the children who had been given dexamethasone had IQs an average of five points lower than the 74 who had received the dummy shots. They were also more easily distracted and scored an average of three points lower on a 36-point arithmetic test.

Those differences did not affect the youngsters' school work. That is probably because many Taiwanese families with disabled children hire tutors to send them to special classes to help them catch up, Yeh said.

It is not clear exactly how widely dexamethasone is used. Over the past few years, the major pediatric associations in the United States, Canada and Europe — including the American Academy of Pediatrics — have recommended against using the steroid in premature babies, because of side effects that include holes in the stomach or intestine. Other types of steroids are available.

Dr. Alan Jobe of Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center said the findings indicate that doctors need to be very cautious with any steroids given to premature babies, and that more tests are needed to find the safe way to give them.

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THE REASON



NEWS IN BRIEF

Durable-goods orders, new-home sales rebounded during February

WASHINGTON (AP) — Factory saw demand for big-ticket goods rebound in February, good news for the country's economic health and for manufacturers who have struggled to get their piece of the business recovery.

The Commerce Department reported Wednesday that orders for "durable" goods — costly manufactured products that are expected to last at least three years — rose by 2.5 percent last month. That was an improvement from the 2.7 percent drop registered in January and represented the largest increase since October.

February's performance was better than economists were expecting.

MasterCard® Priceless Experience™ '04 Music Internship Contest Official Rules. No Purchase Necessary to Enter or Win. Eligibility: Open to legal residents of the 50 United States and the District of Columbia who are 18 to 25 years of age and are enrolled as full or part-time undergraduate students in a U.S. Department of Education accredited 2-year or 4-year college/university as of 2/24/04 and at the time of winner selection and notification. Employees of MasterCard International Incorporated ("Sponsor"), MasterCard member financial institutions, Enigma Media, Inc. ("Enigma"), Octagon Worldwide Limited, Universal Music Group, Project Support Team, Inc. ("PST"), and each of their respective parent companies, affiliates, distributors, subsidiaries, and advertising/promotion agencies (collectively "Released Parties") and members of the immediate family (mother, father, brothers, sisters, sons, daughters and spouse) and household of each such employee are not eligible to participate. This Contest is subject to all applicable federal, state and local laws and regulations. Void where prohibited. **How to Participate:** 1) Visit www.mastercard.com and click on the MasterCard Priceless Experience™ '04 icon between 12:00:01PM Central Time (CT) on 2/24/04 and 8:59:59AM CT on 4/15/04 ("Promotion Period"); 2) To access the application form, click on the "Apply Now" button; 3) Submit an essay of no more than 250 words answering the following question: *If you were to play your ideal career in the music business, what would it be and why?* The entry must be your original creation, in English and cannot have been previously published or submitted in any prior competition. Modification of an existing work does not qualify as original; 4) Fully complete the online entry and 5) Click the "Submit" button. **Limit one entry per person and per email address for the duration of the Promotion Period. Additional entries received from each person and/or email address thereafter will be void.** Your submission of an entry constitutes your consent to participate in this Contest and your consent for Sponsor to obtain, use, and transfer your name, address and other information for the purpose of administering this Contest. Sponsor is not responsible for lost, incomplete, late, stolen, or misdirected entries or submissions, theft, destruction or unauthorized access to, or alteration of, entries; failures or malfunctions of phones, pagers, faxes, or other electronic devices; internet or other network, server or other connections; any error, omission, interruption, defect or delay in any transmission or communication; traffic congestion on the internet or for any technical problems, including but not limited to any injury or damage to entrant's or any other person's computer related to or resulting from participation in this Contest; errors in these Official Rules; in any Contest-related advertisements or other materials; the selection or announcement of winners or the awarding of prizes; the cancellation, suspension or modification of online distance-learning seminars, or other problems or errors of any kind whether mechanical, human, electronic or otherwise. Sponsor reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to void any and all entries of an entrant who Sponsor believes has attempted to tamper with or impair the administration, security, fairness, or proper play of this Contest. The use of automated entry devices is prohibited. All entries will become the property of Sponsor and will not be returned. Neither Sponsor, nor anyone acting on its behalf, will enter into any communications with any entrant regarding any aspect of this Contest other than to notify potential winners. **Judging:** Winner selection for this Contest will occur in two phases. **Semifinalist Selection:** A total of (48) Semifinalists will be selected in accordance with the following Entry Periods: each Entry Period beginning at 12:00:01PM CT and ending at 8:59:59AM CT respectively: (16) Entry Period #1 Semifinalists: 2/24/04-3/1/04, (16) Entry Period #2 Semifinalists: 3/2/04-3/23/04 and (16) Entry Period #3 Semifinalists: 3/24/04-4/15/04. Entries received during one Entry Period will not carry forward to subsequent Entry Periods. Entries will be judged by an independent panel of judges ("Judges") supervised by PST (an independent judging organization whose decisions will be final and binding in all matters relating to this Contest) based on the following criteria: 1) Originality: 0-40 points; 2) Creativity/Written Expression: 0-30 points; and 3) Relevance to Theme: 0-30 points. In the event of a tie, the entrant with the highest score in Originality will be declared the potential Semifinalist. If a tie still exists, from among the remaining pool of tied entrants, the entrant with the highest score in Creativity/Written Expression will be declared the potential Semifinalist, and so forth. Tiebreakers will continue backwards in this manner until the tie among the remaining tied entrants is broken. Finalists will be selected by judges on or about 5/10/04. If any Semifinalist notification letter is returned as undeliverable, a runner-up may be selected. Each Semifinalist will be required to submit the following materials to a specified address within (4) days of issuance of notification: 1) Executed Affidavit of Eligibility, Liability Release and (where legal) Publicity Release; 2) Current college/university transcript (showing that he/she is in good academic standing as defined by his/her respective college/university at time of notification); 3) A video of no more than (2) minutes in length featuring Semifinalist (no third parties, footage and/or music from any other source) addressing the following question: *Tell us about your favorite music video, what you like best about it and why?* The video must be: a) On a 1.2 inch Hi8-format videotape; b) Quoted to starting point; c) Neatly labeled with the entrant's complete name; and d) In English and cannot have been previously screened or publicly viewed. Entrant is responsible for properly protecting videotape for mailing. Noncompliance with any of the foregoing may result in disqualification and awarding of prize to the runner-up. **Finalist Selection:** A total of (16) Finalists will be selected from the (48) Semifinalist video entries submitted. Video entries will be judged based on the following criteria: 1) Presence On-Screen: 0-40 points; 2) Creative Execution: 0-30 points; and 3) Originality: 0-30 points. In the event of a tie, the entrant with the highest score in Presence On-Screen will be declared the potential Finalist. If a tie still exists, from among the remaining pool of tied entrants, the entrant with the highest score in Creative Execution will be declared the potential Finalist, and so forth. Tiebreakers will continue backwards in this manner until the tie among the remaining tied entrants is broken. Finalists will be selected by judges on or about 5/24/04 and will be notified by telephone and/or mail. If any Finalist notification music video developed for an artist/group (managed by Universal Music Group) to be developed solely by Sponsor. Internship will include round-trip coach air transportation from major airport nearest to winner's residence in the U.S., select ground transportation, double-occupancy accommodations at a location to be determined by Sponsor, and a total of \$1,000 spending money awarded in the form of a MasterCard Gift Card (ARV-\$6,000). Limit one prize per person, family, or household. Total ARV of all prizes-\$100,800. Prize details not specifically set forth herein are at Sponsor's sole discretion. Exact dates of internship subject to change at Sponsor's sole discretion. Internship attendance is mandatory and Finalists must comply with all MasterCard rules and regulations relating to their participation in the internship. Sponsor may, in its sole discretion, impose disciplinary sanctions on Finalists, ranging from a warning to expulsion to referral for state or federal prosecution, for violation of federal, state or local laws, and internship codes of conduct. Content of internship to be determined solely by Sponsor and is not for credit. Travel restrictions unavailable to participate in the capacity specified for any reason; an entry/individual of similar stature as determined by Sponsor will participate in lieu of the applicable name(s) and/or individual. **MasterCard® Priceless Experience™:** No transfer, assignment, cash redemption, or substitution of prizes (or portion thereof) except by Sponsor due to prize unavailability, and then for a prize (or applicable portion thereof) of equal or greater value. Federal, state and local taxes and all other costs and expenses not specified herein are winners' sole responsibility. By participating, entrants agree to be bound by these Official Rules and 1) Attest that their essay and/or video ("entry"), as an original creation that has not been previously published or submitted in any other competition; and 2) Agree that Released Parties and their designees and assigns: a) shall own the entry (and all material embodied therein) and shall have the perpetual, worldwide right to edit, publish, exploit and use the entry (or any portion thereof) in any way and in any media for advertising and/or trade purposes and/or for any other purpose in any media or format now or hereafter known without further compensation, permission or notification to the entrant or any third party; b) shall have the right and permission (unless prohibited by law) to use entrant's name, voice, city/state of residence, photograph and/or likeness for advertising and/or trade purposes and/or for the purpose of displaying their name as a winner and/or for any other purpose in any media or format now or hereafter known without further compensation, permission or notification; c) use of entry shall not violate the right of any third parties and shall not violate any applicable federal, state or local laws or ordinances; d) shall have the right, in their sole discretion, to disqualify any entries that they deem to be obscene or otherwise not in good taste; e) shall have no liability and entrant will defend, indemnify and hold harmless Sponsor and the Released Parties from and against any liability, loss, injury or damage of any kind (including attorney's fees) to any person or entity including, without limitation, personal injury, death or damage to personal or real property, due in whole or in part, directly or indirectly, by reason of the acceptance, possession, use or misuse of a prize or participation in this Contest and any travel related thereto including, but not limited to, any claim that entrant's submission infringes or violates the rights of any person or entity. Sponsor reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to modify, terminate or suspend this Contest should virus, bugs, non-authorized human intervention or other causes beyond the reasonable control of Sponsor, (available after 6/15/04), send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to be received by 6/1/04 to: MasterCard® Priceless Experience™ '04 Winner, P.O. Box 13106, Bridgeport, CT 06679-3106. ©2004 MasterCard International Incorporated. All Rights Reserved. Sponsor: MasterCard International Incorporated, 2000 Purchase Street, Purchase, NY 10577. Promoter: Project Support Team, Inc., 100 Mill Plain Road, Danbury, CT 06811