# **CMAJ-JAMC**

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# Editor's preface

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A lthough there are obvious differences between a chain saw and a violin, there is also a striking similarity. The use of each entails repetitive movements. We know from studies in industrial medicine that use of a chain saw or other equipment over an extended period can result in disabling musculoskeletal disorders, injuries that frequently lead to workers' compensation claims and even career changes.

Christine Zaza wondered if musicians have similar problems and found that indeed they do (page 1019). Because most musicians are self-employed, such injuries are not recorded by workers' compensation programs, so there is little information available on the frequency of playing-related musculoskeletal disorders (PRMDs). Zaza searched 7 databases, 2 journals that specialize in medical problems in the arts and other sources for studies on the incidence and prevalence of PRMDs. She found few studies, and only a handful met her predefined criteria for study quality. For the 3 studies that differentiated between mild and more severe problems, the latter occurred in up to 47% of adults and in 17% of secondary school music students, similar to the frequency of such problems among other workers who perform repetitive muscular movements. Complaints of PRMDs should not be ignored by physicians. Zaza recommends research on risk factors to improve our understanding of the causes of PRMDs and to help guide prevention programs.

Robert Remis and John Gill present evidence that some people infected with HIV through blood transfusions are still unknown to the Canadian Red Cross Society (CRC) (page 1027). Under these circumstances, the CRC cannot meet its responsibility to notify all transfusion-infected individuals. The authors

propose a relatively simple method for detecting such cases, which would involve the CRC having access to data concerning HIV-infected recipients still unknown to the agency. Such information would allow the CRC to identify those who received a transfusion from the same unit of blood or from other units given by the same HIV-infected donor. A substantial number of asymptomatic HIVinfected transfusion recipients could thus be identified and offered treatment. We agree with Remis and Gill that Health Canada, the federal agency responsible for regulating the collection and distribution of blood and blood products in Canada, should move aggressively and quickly to implement these recommendations.

Green tea has been used medicinally in China for about 5000 years, and it accounts for about 20% of world consumption of tea. Because of its medicinal properties this product has even been prepared in capsule form. In our continuing series on unconventional therapies for cancer, Elizabeth Kaegi reviews the evidence for the safety and effectiveness of green tea as both a therapeutic agent and a preventive one (page 1033).

Former prime minister Mackenzie King was well known for many things, including his attempts to make contact with his mother after she died. The story of his brother Max, a turnof-the-century physician, is less well known, and we are fortunate that Contributing Editor Charlotte Gray unearthed a wealth of material about "Dr. Max" while researching her recent bestseller, Mrs. King: The Life and Times of Isabel Mackenzie King (page 1066). Her touching portrayal of a physician living in poverty and surviving on his brother's largesse speaks volumes about the state of our profession early in this century and the distance it has come since then. ?