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Customized Briefing for Rana Abou Mrad MD

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Kidney Transplant Recipients Exposed to Large Amounts of Radiation.

A new [study](#) of 172 kidney transplant recipients found they underwent 905 medical imaging studies before transplantation, with 16.3% of patients receiving high doses and 13.4% receiving very high doses of ionizing radiation. Another 40.7% were exposed to low doses and 29.7% were exposed to moderate doses of radiation, according to the *Clinical Journal of the American Society of Nephrology* report. Patients who were older, had diabetes, and were black tended to receive moderate or higher doses of radiation during pretransplant evaluations. Nuclear stress tests accounted for 82.9% of the total radiation exposure.

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Middle Eastern Food Staple High in Salt.

A quarter of the sodium intake in Lebanon comes from breads – including 4% from Lebanese thyme "pizzas" or mana'eesh – said researchers from the Lebanese Epidemiology Association. Investigators noted that lowering salt consumption is one of the most cost-effective methods to prevent death due to cardiovascular diseases, and raising awareness about salt content in foods can help. The Lebanon Action for Salt and Health (LASH) group aims to partner with national regulatory agencies and food industry representatives to develop low-salt product reformulation standards and lobby for effective and user-friendly food labels, according to [AVEinfo.com](#).

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T Cell Treatment Could Slow Autoimmune Disease Development.

Current therapies for autoimmune disease focus on downstream targets of autoimmune responses, but a new treatment in mice targets autoreactive T cells that initiate disease. A recent *Journal of Clinical Investigation* [study](#) found that T regulatory cells called CD8+ Tregs could be recruited to kill off the subset of the harmful T helper cells causing arthritis. When administered weeks after rheumatoid arthritis was initiated, CD8+ Tregs – combined with low doses of methotrexate – significantly slowed the arthritis process. Injecting peptide antigens to expand the animal's own pool of CD8+ Tregs also proved effective.

Stomach Bug May Help Control Diabetes.

Obese mice infected with *Helicobacter pylori* experienced decreased fasting blood glucose levels, increased leptin levels, improved glucose tolerance, and suppressed weight gain compared with uninfected mice or mice infected with a more virulent strain of the bacteria. Increased expression of gastric PPAR γ -responsive genes in the immune and epithelial cells of mice was necessary for *H. pylori* to favorably modulate glucose. Findings from the *PLOS One* [study](#) suggest that *H. pylori* may provide important metabolic traits required to ameliorate diabetes.

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New Formula Aims to Evaluate Transplant Center Performance.

Researchers unveiled a quality index that could be used to compare transplant centers. Preliminary findings presented at the American Society of Transplant Surgeons' State of the Art Winter Symposium described how the formula weighs transplant rates and rates of patient and graft survival. Investigators said that centers with higher quality scores balanced organ sharing with high odds for good

transplant outcomes. Researchers noted the formula found facilities with higher scores had higher rates of organ sharing, longer lengths of stay, less use of organs from donors above age 65, and slightly lower rates of delayed graft function according to [Renal & Urology News](#).

Lawmakers Seek Ways to Address Physician Shortage.

States are working to find ways to address a looming shortage of doctors to treat newly insured patients receiving health care coverage under the Affordable Care Act. California lawmakers are working on proposals to allow physician assistants to treat more patients, nurse practitioners to set up independent practices, and pharmacists and optometrists to diagnose and manage some chronic illnesses – such as diabetes and hypertension – according to a recent *LA Times* [article](#). The California Medical Association says health care professionals should not exceed their training, and the organization wants more funding to expand a loan repayment program for recent medical school graduates.

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