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University News

Washington University, St. Jude team to unravel genetic basis of childhood cancers:

Washington University School of Medicine and St. Jude Children's Research Hospital have announced an unprecedented effort to identify the genetic changes that give rise to some of the world's deadliest childhood cancers. The team has joined forces to decode the genomes of more than 600 childhood cancer patients treated at St. Jude, who have contributed tumor samples for this historic effort.



Courtesy photo
(Left to right) Francis Collins, M.D., Ph.D., director of the National Institutes of Health; Larry J. Shapiro, M.D., executive vice chancellor for medical affairs and dean of Washington University School of Medicine; and William E. Evans, Pharm.D., St. Jude Children's Research Hospital director and chief executive officer, talk before the January 25 press conference in Washington, D.C., announcing the three-year, \$65 million children's cancer research collaboration between Washington University and St. Jude.

Washington University-led moon mission is finalist for NASA's next big space venture:

Nearly 40 years after the Apollo astronauts first brought samples of the Moon to Earth for study, researchers from Washington University are leading an effort to return to the Moon for samples that could unlock secrets of the early Solar System. Known as MoonRise, the proposed Moon mission is one of three finalists now bidding to become NASA's next big space science venture, a \$650 million mission that would launch before 2019.

Olin launches executive education programs in Kansas City:

The John M. Olin Business School is taking its executive education programs on the road and due west on I-70. Destination: Kansas City. Senior faculty will offer the same top-ranked seminars and the 20-month Executive MBA degree program to Kansas City-based professionals as those offered on the St. Louis campus. Olin's executive MBA program was established in 1983 and has been offered in conjunction with Fudan University in Shanghai, China, since 2002.

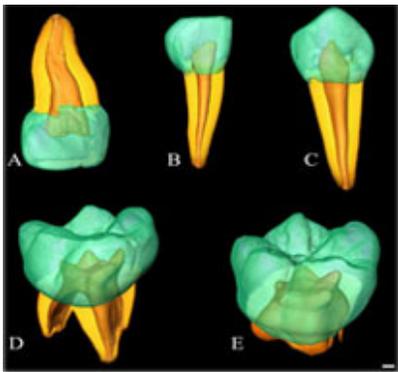
Research

30,000-year-old teeth show ongoing human evolution:

An international team of researchers, including Erik Trinkaus, Ph.D., the Mary Tileston Hemenway Professor of Anthropology in Arts & Sciences, has reanalyzed the complete immature dentition of a child from the Abrigo do Lagar Velho, Portugal, who lived 30,000 years ago. The new analysis of the Lagar Velho child shows that these "early modern humans" were modern without being "fully modern."

Did infectious leverage cause the financial crisis?:

Banks and borrowers went on a leveraged consumption binge that led to the financial crisis in 2008, according to Anjan Thakor, Ph.D., the John E. Simon Professor of Finance at the John M. Olin Business School, and the entire economy is still feeling the hangover pain from the credit-fueled party that caused bank failures and forced foreclosures across the country. Thakor's new research examines the cycles of leveraged borrowing by banks and consumers as a possible cause of the crisis. His new theory of 'infectious leverage' could help prevent future financial meltdowns.



Virtual 3D reconstruction of four deciduous and one permanent teeth assessed for linear, surface, and volumetric tissue proportions. A. deciduous upper right central incisor (Ui1, labial view); B. deciduous lower right lateral incisor (Li2, labial view); C. deciduous lower right canine (Lc, labial view); D. deciduous lower right second molar (Lm2, oblique mesio-buccal view); E. permanent lower right first molar (LM1, oblique mesio-buccal view).

Tiny sensor takes measure of nanoparticles:

Nanotechnology has already made it to the shelves of your local pharmacy and grocery. Nanoparticles are found in anti-odor socks, makeup, makeup remover, sunscreen, anti-graffiti paint, home pregnancy tests, plastic beer bottles, anti-bacterial doorknobs, plastic bags for storing vegetables, and more than 800 other products. How safe are these products and the flood of new ones about to spill out of labs across the world? A group of researchers at Washington University is devising instruments and protocols to assess the impact of nanoparticles on the environment and human health before they are sent to market.

Features

Prof. survives Haiti earthquake; focuses on preventing further public health disaster:

Two days before the earthquake, Lora Iannotti, Ph.D., nutrition and public health expert from the George Warren Brown School of Social Work, traveled to Port-au-Prince and Leogane, Haiti, to continue her research about undernutrition and disease prevention in young children. The massive tremor changed her focus from research for the future to survival, with her team helping children in the aftermath of the quake. On January 15, Iannotti, who has been working in Haiti since 1990, was evacuated back to the United States. "I started to focus on the major public health aftershocks of the earthquake," she says. "If we think carefully now about what this phase will bring, many more lives will be saved."

Staring, sleepiness, other mental lapses more likely in patients with Alzheimer's:

Cognitive fluctuations, or episodes when train of thought temporarily is lost, are more likely to occur in older persons who are developing Alzheimer's disease than in their healthy peers, according to scientists at Washington University School of Medicine. Cognitive fluctuations include excessive daytime sleepiness, staring into space, and disorganized or illogical thinking.



Lora Iannotti

Lora Iannotti, Ph.D., assistant professor at the Brown School, was in Haiti during the earthquake. This is from among her personal photographs shot in the aftermath.

Heard on Campus

"We desire not so much that the pupil shall master the book as the subject; not so much to learn many things as to learn much."

— Jeremiah Low, principal of the Academic Department, at the University's inaugural celebration on April 22, 1857

Mutharika serving Malawi's Parliament, addressing International Justices:

Professor A. Peter Mutharika, who is serving in Malawi's Parliament, has been introducing key legislation and preparing to address the 10th International Congress of Chief Justices of the World. Recently installed as the Charles Nagel Professor of International & Comparative Law, Mutharika is serving as Malawi's Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs. Since his brother, Bingu wa Mutharika, was elected president in 2004 and re-elected in 2009, the country has made major strides, including achieving food sufficiency and being among the fastest growing economies in the world.

Kudos

Ann M. Gronowski, Ph.D., associate professor of pathology and immunology and of obstetrics and gynecology, was elected president of the American Association for Clinical Chemistry for the year 2011. She will serve as president-elect in 2010.

About @Washington University in St. Louis

This newsletter is prepared by Special Development Communications Projects staff in Alumni and Development Programs. It is intended to provide a brief summary of what is happening at the University. Alumni, parents, and friends of the University for whom we have valid e-mail addresses automatically receive @Washington University in St. Louis.

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One Brookings Drive, St. Louis, MO 63130
(314) 935-5000

