

## Research

### VOTING ATTENDANCE RELATED TO SCREENING-SHOW-UP

A study, done by Cancer Research UK, shows that women who rarely or never vote in elections are more likely to skip medical screening too. Emotional barriers, such as shame, have often been found as the biggest obstacle in attending medical screenings. This study shows that practical barriers, such as planning a convenient appointment, are more likely to cause low attendance.

Dr Jo Waller, research associate, said: *In terms of the correlation between voting and screening attendance, it may be that as both activities require a degree of organization, women who do not manage to vote because of busy lives may also be unlikely to attend screening.*

Although the authors of the article call for further research, the outcome of the study is encouraging since minimizing practical barriers is a much more achievable goal than minimizing emotional barriers. **EvdL**

### References

- Cancer epidemic in Iraq "a coincidence": APHA, international-health-science.suite101, January 2010
- Voting attendance related to screening show-up: The Royal Society of Medicine, [www.medicalnewstoday.com](http://www.medicalnewstoday.com), January 2010
- Egypt votes for transplant law: <http://www.thedailynewsegypt.com/ContactUs.aspx>
- US abolishes ban on entry HIV-positive foreigners: H
- Documentary about HIV-stigma: Global Initiative on Psychiatry, <http://www.gip-global.org/> Visit [www.globalmedicine.nl](http://www.globalmedicine.nl) for the link of the film



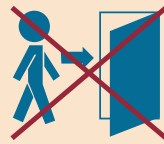
### CANCER EPIDEMIC IN IRAQ "A COINCIDENCE"

Last month again the discussion about the health risks of depleted uranium in Iraq was stirred up after a statement by Iraqi doctors during an oncology symposium in Japan.

The environmental effects and the health consequences after years of war become clearer every day. Doctors report an unusual increase in birth defects and over 140 000 cases of cancer related to the pollution caused by depleted uranium from toxic weaponry. Othman Hasan, Iraq's Environment Minister, said *the weapons are from US-led forces, mainly used in the First Gulf War*. Irradiated particles contaminate water and soil, which eventually enter the food chain.

Still officials say it is hard to establish a significant link because of the poor health facilities and statistics in Iraq. Industrialization and other factors could also contribute to the pollution. **JS**

AIDS orphans in Africa  
**2 500 000**



**12**  
countries restrict entry of  
HIV-positive visitors

\$ mean price of a kidney in Egypt  
**2 200**

### DOCUMENTARY ABOUT HIV-STIGMA

The psychosocial needs of HIV-infected orphans need to get more attention. Therefore the Global Initiative on Psychiatry (GIP) released a documentary on YouTube last month. The film, *Because of my Status*, is about the living conditions of HIV infected orphans in South Africa and shows that their problems cannot be handled separately from their caregivers or the environment they live in. South Africa has the highest rate of HIV infected children in the world; and besides the physical problems, these children struggle with the stigma attached to the disease.

Surf to [www.gip-global.org](http://www.gip-global.org) to watch the documentary. **RB**

### EGYPT VOTES FOR TRANSPLANT LAW

The Egyptian government is finally working on legalization of organ transplantations from brain-dead donors. While donation was illegal, Egypt has been a big organ trade centre for years. Poor people sell their kidneys and are sometimes forced to do so for various reasons.

The demand for organs is high, but donation is only allowed in very limited circumstances. Only living kin can legally donate an organ. Another obstacle is the recognition of brain death in Muslim religion, which makes the debate about organ donation hard. But because president Mubarak and some Islamic authorities gave their support openly, the law passed, donation will be legal and the trade could be regulated. **JS**

### US ABOLISHES BAN ON ENTRY HIV-POSITIVE FOREIGNERS

On January 4th, the United States lifted the restriction on HIV-infected non-US citizens travelling to the country. The new regulation also lifted the previously-required testing of immigrants for HIV during the medical screening process. Last October, President Obama said the entry ban had been *rooted in fear rather than fact*.

Since 1987, HIV/AIDS has been on the list with communicable diseases with public health significance, thus preventing HIV-positive foreigners from entering the country. No major conferences on AIDS have been held in the US since 1990 because of the embargo. Worldwide, there are still twelve countries that restrict entry of HIV-positive visitors. **LD**

