



Dogs can help find you friends

Pets indicate neighbourhood friendliness

PEOPLE wanting to move house should look for a neighbourhood with lots of dogs out doing their business, according to a new study.

A new research paper from the University of Western Australia has shown people feel safer in their community if there are a lot of people walking their furry friends around the neighbourhood.

It found non-pet owners identified people who walk their dogs around their suburb as people who were more likely to get to know their neighbours.

This contributed to a collective feeling of safety and a generalised sense of community, even for the non-pet owners.

The study of 339 people across three Perth suburbs found more than 40 per cent of pet owners said they had got to know other people in the suburb through their pet. And almost 85 per cent of dog walkers talked to other pet owners while out walking their dog.

Big lotto wins unnecessary, but a little bit would help

WE MAY wish for millions but just a few thousand in a lottery win may be enough to make us happy, new research says.

A team from the University of Warwick in the UK set out to find exactly how much money had to be won before it had a long-term impact on happiness.

Quantifying the mental wellbeing of lotto winners of various amounts, they found those who won tens or hundreds of pounds had little change to their wellbeing.

However, they found wins of anything from STG1000 (\$A2500) to STG120,000 (\$A302,000) had a long-term sustained impact on the winners' overall happiness.

The study, which looked 14 years of data from 5000 households, found medium-sized lottery winners were over 10 per cent happier than the average person without a win or with only a small lottery win.

Women with breast implants at high risk of suicide

WOMEN who choose to have breast implants are 73 per cent more likely to commit suicide, a new study finds.

The Canadian study conducted by the Canadian Public Health Agency and Cancer Care Ontario involved 24,600 women across the country who had received implants for cosmetic purposes from 1974 to 1989.

Researchers found no increase in the mortality rate of women with implants, probably because women who undergo the surgery are usually well off and healthier to begin with.

But it did find the suicide rate was much higher than usual.

This was probably because the psychological profile of women who receive breast implants is often characterised by low-self-esteem, a lack of self confidence and more frequent bouts of mental illness, like depression. The findings prompted researchers to call for health professionals to ensure a woman wanting implants seek advice from a mental health professional first.

Cure for cancer may be on the spice rack

EATING an Indian curry could do better things to your colon than previously thought.

Researchers at the University of Texas have been investigating the active properties of turmeric and found it may suppress the development of colorectal cancer.

The spice is commonly used for cooking but has been used as a medicine in India for centuries.

It contains an active ingredient, curcumin, which researchers have found fights skin, breast and other tumour cells.

Human clinical trials using curcumin have already been launched.

Musical children have improved memory

CHILDREN who get musical training from a young age show different brain development



and an improved memory compared to kids who go without, new research shows.

Canadian researchers, who published their findings in the online journal *Brain*, found that after one year musically trained children performed better in memory tests correlated with general intelligence skills such as literacy, verbal memory mathematics and IQ.

The study looked at the responsiveness and memory of children aged between four and six, some of whom were taking Suzuki music lessons and others who had no musical training outside of school.

Changes in development became apparent after only four months.

Stroke victims encouraged to join the XBOX generation

INEXPENSIVE video game equipment can be adapted for the rehabilitation of people who have had a stroke, new research suggests. Researchers from the State University of New Jersey in the US have modified an Xbox game system to create a training program that measures finger flexibility and wrist position, helping people recover the use of their hand after a stroke.

They developed software to go with a virtual reality gaming glove which offers two types of finger-flexing exercises needed to help stroke patients recover hand functions.

In one exercise, for example, a patient must try and make a fist fast enough to "scare away" a butterfly on the screen.

The cost of the modified system is about \$US549 (\$A730), which makes it a much more reasonable option than the high-end rehabilitation systems currently used which can reach \$US18,000 (\$A23,950).