

## News Highlights:

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- The U.S. FDA warned that weight loss drug **Belviq** (lorcaserin) may increase a patient's risk of cancer.

<https://www.fda.gov/safety/medical-product-safety-information/belviq-belviq-xr-lorcaserin-drug-safety-communication-due-possible-increased-risk-cancer>

*Read patient experiences with Belviq:*

<https://www.askapatient.com/viewrating.asp?drug=22529&name=BELVIQ>

- Less than half (41%) of United States **clinical trials** have complied with new regulations that require reporting results within 12 months of a trial's completion. *The Lancet* reports that non-industry sponsored trials (such as those conducted by universities, hospitals, and governments) are the most likely to breach the requirement to publish results on ClinicalTrials.gov.

[https://www.eurekalert.org/pub\\_releases/2020-01/tl-pss011620.php](https://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2020-01/tl-pss011620.php)

- Just as people have a **genotype**, so too do they have an "**ageotype**," a combination of molecular and other changes that are specific to one physiological system. Researchers are working on ways to create personalized medicines that are based on how our body systems age at different rates. "A 50-year-old could get a blood test and learn that his kidney is 60 but his heart is 40, and do something about [kidney aging]."

<https://www.statnews.com/2020/01/13/ageotypes-scientists-bring-personalized-medicine-to-biology-of-aging/>

- Acid reflux drugs taken to ease stomach problems during breast cancer treatment may be associated with cognitive problems. A study found that cancer patients using Proton Pump Inhibitor (**PPI**) drugs like Prilosec or Nexium were 20% more likely to have problems with memory and concentration than the patients not using the drugs.

[https://www.eurekalert.org/pub\\_releases/2020-01/osu-ard011720.php](https://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2020-01/osu-ard011720.php)

- AARP, a non-profit interest group for Americans 50 and over, surveyed women's opinions about non-invasive, technology-related solutions to relieve **menopausal symptoms**. One third (34%) of women say their menopausal symptoms interfere a great deal with their sleep, and about one in five say their symptoms interfere with their mood (21%) and romantic relationships (19%). Among menopausal women, 98% were interested in noninvasive solutions to relieve menopausal symptoms.

<https://www.aarp.org/research/topics/health/info-2020/menopause-symptoms-technology-related-solutions.htm>

- A Pennsylvania judge reduced an enormous **\$8 billion jury award** by more than 1000%, to \$6.4 million. In October, a jury determined that Johnson & Johnson should pay \$8 billion in punitive damages to a 26-year-old patient who had grown breasts as a result of taking the antipsychotic drug **Risperdal** as a boy. Both sides plan to appeal.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-johnson-johnson-risperdal-idUSKBN1ZG293>

- Chance of survival for a low birth weight baby increases substantially if the "**kangaroo method**" of holding the baby throughout the day is used, according to this study.

[https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2020/01/200109111104.htm ...](https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2020/01/200109111104.htm...)

- A downside to **speedy drug approvals** is less rigor in evaluating the safety and effectiveness of new drugs, according to a research article published in the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA). Almost half of recent new drug approvals were based on only one clinical trial instead of the two or more that used to be the norm. (Maybe this could be a reason for the increase in [safety-related label changes](#) in recent years, as safety issues are increasingly not being identified prior to drug launches.)

<https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2020/01/14/796227083/fda-approves-drugs-faster-than-ever-but-relies-on-weaker-evidence-researchers-fi...>

- On Monday, a three-judge federal appeals court panel heard arguments related to the Trump administration's (Health and Human Services) blocked rule that would require pharmaceutical companies to disclose certain **prescription drug list prices in television commercials**. Judges were skeptical, and bipartisan legislation supporting it has not been successful so far.

<https://thehill.com/policy/healthcare/478030-appeals-court-skeptical-of-trump-rule-on-tv-drug-ads>

- The high cost of **multiple sclerosis drugs** is affecting patients' everyday lifestyle and their ability to save for things like college education and retirement, according to a survey conducted by the National Multiple Sclerosis Society. The patient group has criticized Novartis for pricing its new Mayzent pill at \$88,500 and EMD Serono for charging \$99,500 for its new Mavenclad tablet.

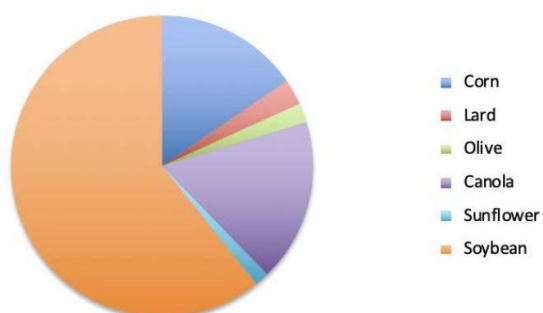
<https://www.statnews.com/pharmalot/2020/01/13/multiple-sclerosis-drug-prices-2/>

- At the annual J.P. Morgan Healthcare conference this week, investment-worthy **health care tech startups** were showcased. One of the 20 hottest companies identified by *The Observer* was Eyesafe, maker of technology that can be incorporated into electronics' screens to automatically reduce the amount of **blue light** that our eyes are exposed to. Also, \$9 million has been invested so far in Omcare, maker of a **home medicine dispenser** that enforces medication compliance in a "big brother" kind of way: two Wi-Fi-connected interactive cameras for viewing in real-time that a patient "not only handles the packet of pre-loaded pills (at the right time), but also swallow them as well (ergo the second camera!)"

<https://observer.com/2020/01/flyover-tech-jp-morgan-healthcare-conference-2020/>

- For the best potential health effects, consider buying a non-soybean type of vegetable oil. In a University of California Riverside study, mice that were fed a **soybean oil** diet experienced more than 100 genetic changes in the brain, including reduced oxytocin production and changes in genes that affect metabolism. The coconut oil-fed mice experienced very few genetic changes. Researchers point out limitations of the findings, and reassure that most soybean products are healthy. Soybean oil is by far the most commonly used kind of dietary oil in the U.S. [https://www.eurekalert.org/pub\\_releases/2020-01/uoc--amw011620.php](https://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2020-01/uoc--amw011620.php)

### Consumption (million pounds)



**Edible fats and oils consumed in the U.S., 2017-18**

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