

Negative words register faster

Subliminal messages are most effective when they have negative words, English researchers say.

Subliminal messages are images shown so quickly that viewers don't consciously "see" them, according to background information in the University College London study.

It included 50 volunteers who were shown a series of words on a computer screen. The words appeared for only a fraction of a second, much too briefly for the participants to consciously read them. The words were either positive (for example, cheerful, peace, flower), negative (murder, despair, agony), or neutral (box, kettle, ear).

As the words were displayed, the participants were asked to choose whether they were positive, negative or neutral. Their choices were most accurate when responding to negative words.

"There has been much speculation about whether people can process emotional information unconsciously, for example pictures, faces and words. We have shown that people can perceive the emotional value of subliminal messages and have demonstrated conclusively that people are much more attuned to negative words," study leader Professor Nilli Lavie said in a Wellcome Trust news release.

"Clearly, there are evolutionary advantages to responding rapidly to emotional information. We can't wait for our consciousness to kick in if we see someone running towards us with a knife or if we drive under rainy or foggy weather conditions and see a sign warning 'danger,'" Lavie said.

The findings, published in the journal *Emotion*, have implications for the use of subliminal marketing in advertising and in public service announcements, such as safety campaigns.

"Negative words may have more of a rapid impact," Lavie said. "Kill your speed" should be more noticeable than "Slow down." More controversially, highlighting a competitor's negative qualities may work on a subliminal level much more effectively than shouting about your own selling points."

(Source: *HealthDay News*)

N.H. restaurant sets meatball record



CONCORD, N.H. (AP) — The bouncing mega-meatball record has landed in the East Coast.

Matthew Mitnitsky, owner of Nonni's Italian Eatery in Concord, said Sunday that a 222.5-pound meatball was authenticated as the world's largest after being weighed by state weights and measures officials.

A Guinness Book of World Records official confirmed the big meatball as a record breaker and presented Mitnitsky with a plaque.

The old record of 198.6 pounds was set just over a month ago after Los Angeles-based talk show host Jimmy Kimmel vowed to beat a record set in Mexico. That record — 109 pounds — was set in August.

Mitnitsky said he got involved "to bring the meatball back to the East Coast because that's where it originated."

Avoiding crowds, not masks, best protection against swine flu

Panic over H1N1 influenza, popularly known as swine flu, has been growing day by day in the world with the pandemic -- as it is defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) -- claiming thousands of lives around the world.

Turkey, which has documented slowly increasing numbers of swine flu cases until recently, when figures almost doubled in a week, has been alarmed by the spread of the virus since cases doubled last week and neared 1,500. It was also last week when the country's first three swine flu fatalities were reported, which prompted officials to step up measures to prevent the spread of the virus.

Although wearing face masks is noted among measures to prevent the swine flu, Turks seem to be reluctant to wear the masks, with various concerns including being a suspected swine flu patient, creating panic and believing that being infected is unlikely.

Experts state that although it is not necessary at the time being for everyone to wear a mask in public areas, they stress that avoiding crowded places is of crucial importance to keep the swine flu virus at bay.

"The media have played a major role in arousing public awareness about swine flu in Turkey. But it is enough now. Any more would create panic. There is no need for those who are not infected to wear masks for the time being," stated Turkish Public Health Association President and public health expert Professor Hikmet Pekcan to Sunday's *Zaman*.

Pekcan seems to be right according to



a recent survey on public knowledge about swine flu in Turkey.

According to the survey conducted by AC Nielsen, public consciousness has increased in Turkey regarding swine flu. The survey, which was carried out with the participation of 224 people over the age of 18, has shown that 91 percent of participants had heard of the pandemic, and 86 percent of those who are informed about swine flu are also informed about how the virus is transmitted.

According to the survey, 72 percent of respondents noted that the virus is transmitted more commonly through aerosolized droplets -- spread by sneezing, coughing, talking or kissing. Ninety-three percent of people surveyed stated that they had been informed about swine flu through television. While 36 percent of those knowledgeable about the virus cited avoiding travel to countries that had documented swine flu deaths as a precaution, 32 percent stated that masks should be worn to avoid the virus.

"Measures taken by the Health Ministry are sufficient for the time being, and there is no need to create panic among the public. The public has been aware of the threat. Those who are infected should wear masks as well as those whose immune systems are

weak.

The best way to prevent the virus is to avoid going into crowded environments and frequently washing one's hands," says Pekcan.

Assistant Professor Ibrahim Erayman of Konya Selçuk University also tells people not to ride public transportation unless it is necessary since crowded areas make the virus spread more quickly. "If a person has flu symptoms like sneezing, he or she should wear a mask. People should cover their faces with a handkerchief while sneezing or coughing," he says.

Stressing that the swine flu virus can be transmitted through aerosolized droplets that can even enter the body through the eyes, Professor Tahsin Yesildere, the head of the Istanbul Chamber of Veterinary Surgeons (IVHO), also says it is of crucial importance for those with flu symptoms to wear masks. Noting that everybody should be cautious about the virus, he warns people using public transportation in particular.

"We should not say 'Nothing will happen to me' and instead should pay attention to warnings. Hands and the nose should be frequently washed. If you are in a crowded place and sneeze, you should not cover your face with your hands but with a handkerchief," he says.

Professor Pekcan draws attention to the current public awareness of swine flu, which helps keep the virus at bay, and says the H1N1 scare had one positive effect on the public as it got people to adopt some habits to prevent the spread of contagious diseases.

"Now people are more cautious in public areas when they sneeze; they wash their hands more frequently, etc. These are ways of preventing other diseases such as seasonal influenza and hepatitis, which also claim the lives of many every year," he adds.

(Source: *todayzaman.com*)

5 habits to break before it's too late

You want to live a long, full life -- to be young and lean forever. But you could be doing yourself more harm than good.

"Someday," you say, "I'm going to get my health back on track, after this next project," or "when I get back from my cruise," or "when the kids get a little older" ... C'mon, you know your list of reasons -- or what I call EXCUSES -- better than I.

Look, if you're waiting for some magical day to appear, you just may be waiting forever. These days do not "show up"; you show up for THEM. I have identified five critical areas, bad habits that many people mindlessly follow. Do you realize that each and every day of your life that you do not reverse these dangerous trends, you get farther and farther from your ultimate goal of living a fulfilling life?

Take a look at each area, determine how you stack up, and then make the fix today:

1) Stealing from sleep: Studies show that a minimum of seven to nine hours of uninterrupted sleep (at night) are essential for health. Sleep is the time when your body repairs and recovers from all of the metabolic processes that your body performs every second. Sleep supports healthy weight management, raises growth hormone, and heals the adrenals. If you are watching TV, working on your PC, or otherwise stimulating yourself so that you are unable to go to sleep by 11 PM, then establish the Power Down Hour and turn to more relaxing activities like baths, light novels, or cuddling with a loved one (or pet!) at least an hour or two before bedtime. Then ... restrain yourself to sleep through the night.

2) Skipping breakfast: How many times do you find yourself dashing out the door to start your day, only to discover that you forgot to eat? Listen, your body has just "fasted" overnight, and in order to fuel yourself for the day (and lower stress hormones), you must eat a balanced meal that includes proteins, fats, and carbohydrates.



Otherwise, your body will turn on itself for fuel, and it isn't fat but muscle that it's going to target ... which will cascade into a very nasty sequence of health consequences that will make you fat, old, and tired before your time.

3) Blowing off exercise: If you think you can manage your health and weight through dietary means alone, it won't work. Period. Exercise is crucial for stimulating proper physical and hormonal response necessary for building muscle and bone,

burning fat, letting you sleep, keeping you young, giving you energy -- the list is endless. More important is the CORRECT type of exercise, which involves high-intensity interval training, along with resistance workouts. If you can't find 20-30 minutes a day to incorporate these exercises into your life (oh yeah, that is ALL you need, by the way), then you can kiss your health goodbye.

4) Noshing at night: Strapping on the feedbag in the evenings basically signals your body to hold off on burning existing fat stores, raises stress hormones before bedtime, and screws up your body's natural digestive processes at a time when it should be ready to shut down and repair. If you are eating in a hormonally-balanced way during your evening meal, there is absolutely no need to munch afterward.

5) Not counting your beverages: One of the craziest things I encounter in my work is the lack of consideration of high-calorie, high-sugar drinks in the diet. Yes, those healthy "Jumbo Juices," designer coffee slurpees (hey, they may as well be, given all the sugar in them), can really pack on the pounds in a hurry. Make the switch to healthier options like iced green tea -- or, my favorite, Emergen-C -- for some sparkling mineral replacements that not only satisfy, but also fuel and nourish!

(Source: *shine.yahoo.com*)

300m children trapped in poverty in S. Asia: UNICEF

DHAKA (Xinhua) — New data unveiled by the United Nations' children agency Sunday showed that 300 million children are trapped in poverty in South Asia -- almost half of the children in the region.

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) presented the new data at a regional conference in Bangladesh capital Dhaka Sunday while convening leaders of the region to explore new ways for addressing children's seven basic needs, including food, education and health.

"We now have a better understanding of the real depth of how poverty affects children -- not just as a side effect of their parents' income but their own profound deprivation," said UNICEF Regional Director for South Asia, Daniel Toole, while speaking at the conference.

"Unlike any other region in the world, due to persistent and deep inequalities in the region, children in South Asia become trapped in an unrelenting cycle of discrimination at several levels-- poor nutrition, health and sanitation and being excluded from education," he said in the conference styled "Achieving Child Well-being and Equity in South Asia."

This puts a child's face to chronic poverty so we can now design more strategic policies, he added.

UNICEF, on the ground in over 150 countries and territories to help children survive and thrive, from early childhood through adolescence, is proposing that a shift in the definition of poverty needs to take place -- away from a narrow measurement that addresses

income exclusively to a definition that includes income poverty, deprivation and well-being, said a paper provided by the UNICEF.

It said this approach can result in comprehensive policy responses that target a more holistic approach to achieving children's well-being.

In the first day of the three-day conference, the government officials, the UNICEF and the civil society of South Asia region examined ways of using this new approach to pinpoint efforts to tackle child poverty.

Delegates as well as government officials, academics, and other groups working to eliminate child poverty from the region, representatives from UNICEF and other UN agencies and development partners from across South Asia are attending the conference which will close Nov. 3.

Over the past decade, the UNICEF said child poverty rates in South Asia have stagnated or even worsened in some areas, raising grave concerns about children's well-being.

"Investing in children is both a fundamental responsibility and an opportunity that, if not grabbed now, will tarnish a nation's growth," Toole said in his speech.

He said this is a responsibility because poverty and under-nutrition damages a child's chance to thrive and also hampers the potential of countries to develop.

More than other interventions, investing resources into good nutrition, primary health care, education and protection for children will provide rich rewards in future, Toole said.



1,300 children at immigrant centers

More than 1,300 children were detained at three immigration removal centers in the UK during a 15-month period, figures have revealed.

A total of 884 children were held at Yarl's Wood immigration removal centre in Bedfordshire between July 2008 and July 2009, 328 children at the Tinsley House centre near Gatwick Airport between September 1 2008 and August 31 2009, and 103 children at the Dungavel centre in Scotland between October 2008 and September 18 2009.

The figures were in a letter from Immigration Minister Phil Woolas to Scottish National Party MP Pete Wishart, the party's home affairs spokesman.

It also revealed that between April 2004 and September 2009 a total of 889 children from 488 families had been detained for more than 28 days - something which has to be authorized by ministers.

Wishart said: "Detaining children in centers made for adults is simply wrong. Whatever the position of the parents, children should not be detained behind barbed wire. That 103 children have been held in Scotland - where the Scottish Government is firmly against child detention is deeply disturbing. It's time for the UK Government to end this practice."

"These figures show nearly 200 children a year are being held for more than four weeks. Regardless of what provision is made for children in these centers they are that they are being held behind bars is unacceptable."

I will be pursuing this issue with the UK Government. Children's welfare is not well served by the UK's actions and regardless of their parents' immigration status children should not have to pay this price."

He accused the Government of "detaining the equivalent of a high school every year across the UK", claiming it was the first time statistics on the number of children held in such centers had been released.

However, the letter cautioned that these figures were not subject to the "detailed checks" that usually apply to official statistics. It further added individual children may have been counted more than once, as they could have been transferred from one centre to another.

In his letter Woolas stressed "the welfare of children is an issue which I take very seriously".

The minister added: "The UK Border Agency is introducing the duty of care to children through the Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Bill. In addition a program to improve statistics on people held in detention is under way. This will result in more statistics published, subject to data quality, in 2009. The program of work will give a particular focus to detained children."

((Source: *UKPA*))