causes no harm, and 87% of parents would choose laser treatment again for their children. In our opinion, until we have effective treatments, which may not be so far away (antiangiogenic drugs or factors), we should continue laser (or cryo) treatment in possibly problematic early lesions. If disfigurement or other complication can be avoided or amended in even a small number of children, we believe treatment is worth a try.

Ulrich Hohenleutner, Michael Landthaler
Klinik und Poliklinik für Dermatologie, Klinikum der Universität Regensburg, 93042 Regensburg, Germany
(e-mail: Ulrich.Hohenleutner@klinik.uni-regensburg.de)

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Casting their lot upon the water: commercial fishing safety

See page 543

As described in Stephen Roberts' and colleagues Research letter in today's *Lancet*, commercial fishermen work in the most hazardous occupation in the UK, followed closely by other mariners. This result is similar to the findings of Rafnsson and Gunnarsdottir's landmark 1994 study of Icelandic fishermen and mariners.[1] The hazard is probably similar worldwide.[2,3] Although many of the hazards inherent to fishing (weather, waves, risk of capsising and drowning) were known and described in classic texts (eg, the Bible, *Moby Dick*), these hazards have been greatly complicated during the past century, as fishing decks have become increasingly complex industrial environments. The deck of a modern fishing vessel is a pitching slippery surface with many winches, lines, booms, and pulleys, all with their hazards of injury.[4] The worldwide realisation that something could be done to mitigate these hazards has only gained momentum during the past few decades. There have recently been productive scientific, technological, social, and regulatory approaches to the many hazards of work on the seas.

Although the physiology of drowning has been well-understood for centuries, that of immersion hypothermia only became well-described in the mid-20th century.[5] This new knowledge led to the development of immersion suits, neoprene garments which can be donned by fishermen abandoning ship in cold waters and which can keep them relatively warm and buoyant, optimally for a few hours, until rescue. Development of synthetic fabrics has made self-inflating life-rafts a practical option for many vessels, and their use in open seas is codified by the international Safety of Life at Sea convention. Wide deployment of communications satellites has permitted the development of emergency position-indicating radio beacons, which greatly facilitate the location of sinking vessels,[6] and satellite-based weather surveillance, which has increased the precision of weather forecasts for much of the earth. Telemedicine services delivered by satellite telephone are now commercially available for fishing and merchant vessels.

There are, however, two other areas which have not been well exploited yet. Vessel stability is well understood and measurable. However, many of the vessels that sink have had their stability compromised by retrofitting and/or overloading, often by the addition of heavy machinery above deck. Another growing area is the study of human fatigue and its role in transportation incidents.[7] Problematically, most scheduling of work time for fishing vessels still revolves around fishing seasons and long transport-times between port and the fishing grounds. Thus the performance of fishermen may often be below par because they are tired. This fatigue can lead to reduced vigilance in operating hazardous machinery and impaired judgment in deciding when to start or terminate a voyage.[8]

Although many developed nations (including the Nordic nations, the UK, Iceland, Canada, the USA, Spain, Russia, New Zealand, and Chile)[9] maintain large and active search-and-rescue operations or coast guards, and have improved their surveillance for these events, international agencies—the International Labour Organization and, increasingly, the Food and Agriculture Organization—have taken on the organising of progress for many other developing nations.[2,10] The industrial-scale high-seas fisheries using vessels over 24 m in length have been widely codified for safety by consensus among many nations in the 1993 Torremolinos Protocol, although formal adoption of these standards as national requirements (eg, the Commercial Fishing Vessel Safety Act of 1988 in the USA) has been variable. Where adopted, more vigorous safety regulations have already helped to prevent many deaths—well documented in Alaska[11]—as has the implementation of rigorous training programmes by non-governmental organisations.[12] Organisation and regulation of fishing-vessel use, equipment, and training of personnel in the developed nations should continue to yield progress in reducing the mortality among fishermen and seafarers.

However, most of the world's estimated 36 million fishermen[13] reside in developing nations and have hardly been touched by any of these developments, often going to sea in small marginally seaworthy craft with little or no safety equipment and limited access to reliable weather predictions. This situation may now be changing: the smaller artisanal (family-operated) fisheries that are common in developing nations are also being progressively organised. A large regional meeting, including official delegations from Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, the Maldives, Sri Lanka, and Thailand, was held last year in India to address this issue and resulted in the Chennai Declaration,[14] which sets the stage for the application of appropriate technology, community-based training, and regulations to be implemented in these settings. Some of these approaches, imaginatively applied, may make for better lives as well as safer work—eg, by developing local fabrication of inexpensive personal

flotation-devices or internet interfaces in village kiosks to provide basic health information in addition to current weather predictions and safe-fishing tips.

Real progress in the developed nations' efforts to prevent fishing fatalities are just beginning. Much more work will be needed to make this occupation acceptably safe. Even more effort will be needed to spread the full benefits of new technology to the artisanal and subsistence fishermen and boats so numerous in maritime developing nations. These benefits, which include access to satellite weather prediction and simple, inexpensive measures such as flotation vests, and amendments to improve vessel buoyancy, are all within reach, provided there is sufficient international commitment.

George A Conway
CDC/NIOSH, Anchorage, AK 99508, USA
(e-mail: GConway@cdc.gov)

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"Chimps plead hands off our genome"

Snappy title, eh? Me and my old friend Eric thought up that one. We've chatted before,[1] about human rights, bit of a laugh. This time it's serious. The US National Genome Research Institute has picked us chimpanzees to have our genome sequenced, along with *Gallus gallus* and *Strongylocentrotus purpuratus* (that's chicken and sea urchin to you).[2] Some company. Still, that's not the point.

"How like us is that ugly beast, the monkey"

They say the human genome differs from ours by 1·2%, making it seem we and you lot are close—too close for comfort, Eric adds. Considering most of the genome is rubbish, it's probably closer than 1·2% of the useful bits. Anyway, it's no news we're related: was it not the orator Marcus Tullius Cicero (106–43 BC) who said, "Simia quam similis, turpissima bestia, nobis"? (Frankly, I think "turpissima" is a bit much.) What's insulting is that Robert Waterson from Washington says in the NGRI report that we do not "suffer from some of the diseases that strike humans, such as malaria and AIDS". Furthermore, "If we see genetic variants in the human population that we don't see in chimp, then we'll know that the genetic change occurred after human beings evolved from non-human primates and may be important for disease susceptibility."

Let's take this point by point. Robert (if I may) hasn't done his homework. We do get malaria, but don't make much of a fuss about it.[3,4] And if we don't actually get AIDS, we can get infected with HIV (usually by you lot), seroconvert, and have the virus persist in mononuclear cells,[3] which is a pretty small difference from AIDS. Next, and it's not nugatory, we've got our dignity, you know—how would Robert take to being called a "hume"? Then, there's this wretched calumny about phylogeny: who evolved from whom? We reckon it's the other way about—we evolved from you. Bend the usual cladogram about 2 million years ago, so apes go straight ahead . . . it makes perfect sense.

I mean, if evolution is about progress, *Homo sapiens* just doesn't cut it in the real world. They've got no proper hair, so have to wear clothes (especially in Washington), they can't climb for toffee, and their teeth are, let's face it, a joke. I could go on. Let me just tell you: leave our genome alone. We don't want a single gene from you, so you can't have any of ours.

As told to *John Bignall*
The Lancet, London NW1 7BY, UK

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