

# ACID SLAP IN THE FACE



Rescuers attend to the injured in Mong Kok after a bottle of acid, left, was thrown into the street — just hours after surveillance cameras were switched on.

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**Diana Lew**

Twenty-four people including a four-year-old girl and a number of tourists were hurt in an acid attack in Mong Kok last night — just five hours after police switched on surveillance cameras in the area.

It is the third attack of its kind since December and given the timing, is being viewed as a direct challenge to the authorities.

As detectives scoured surveillance footage last night, 300 officers flooded the area to hunt for the attacker or attackers. Commissioner of Police Tang Ka-sing vowed to track down those behind it.

A number of those hurt said the corrosive liquid rained down shortly before 8pm at the junction of Nelson and Sai Yeung Choi streets.

The bottle used was 17-19 centimeters long, contained what is thought to be acid and was similar to those used in the previous two attacks.

It was found on the road outside 15B Nelson Street still opening white vapor. The area is about 100 meters from the first attack in December and about 150 meters from the second incident on May 17.

Many of those injured were treated on the spot for head, shoulder and hand injuries while others were sent to Kwong Wah and Queen Elizabeth hospitals.

Nurses poured purified water on burns before they were treated and bandaged.

A victim hit by the bottle said he was not aware it was corrosive until he felt a burning sensation. A nearby shopkeeper helped him wash off the liquid, he said.

Mr Chan, who works for an electronic shop, said he saw passersby scattering before he realized it was another acid attack.

"I heard no one shouting but I noticed some of their clothes had holes as a result of acid burns," Chan said.

The government decided to install surveillance cameras overlooking Sai Yeung Choi Street South after the earlier attacks which injured 76 people in total.

Yau Tim Mong district councillor Hau Wing-cheung, who is in charge of a working group for the installation of the so-called "sky eyes," confirmed they had been in operation since 1pm yesterday.

"This acid throwing is obviously a challenge to the police. It is an unscrupulous crime. The formal operation of the sky eyes was not supposed to be known by outsiders and the district council had planned to announce it after a meeting on Tuesday," he said.



A father tells of how he and his baby son escaped the acid attack near Nelson Street.



Kowloon West Headquarters senior superintendent Leung Ka-ming said 12 males and 12 females suffered minor injuries. One was a four-year-old girl.

"Five teams of detectives from Kowloon West regional crime unit, the anti-raid unit, blue-beret police officers and other frontline officers were dispatched to the scene to conduct an exhaustive search. Police will work in liaison with the Yau Tim Mong District Council to inspect the surveillance images captured by the "sky eyes" to help the investigation," Leung said.

"The police have not ruled out any motive for the attack," he said when asked whether the culprit knew of the completion of "sky eyes" and intended to challenge the authorities.

Outrage over attack: Page 10

## Health & Beauty

# Green mystery

Jennifer LaRue Hugel

**I**N A GREENHOUSE in Beltsville, Maryland, Steve Britz aims light-emitting diodes at rows of plants, hoping to coax more color out of the leaves. In a lab in Pomona, California, David Still painstakingly manipulates plants' genetic structure, then analyzes their progeny.

The two have a common goal: to build a better head of lettuce. Specifically, Britz, a research plant physiologist with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's research unit, and Still, a professor of horticulture and plant and soil science at California State Polytechnic University at Pomona, seek to create varieties of lettuce that contain more antioxidants.

Antioxidants are darlings of the nutrition world, valued for their purported health-promoting and disease-fighting qualities. But even as Britz and Still toil away, neither is sure antioxidants are all they're cracked up to be.

The body's daily functions, such as metabolizing food, and its exposure to such environmental hazards as pollution, produce stray molecules known as free radicals, which can oxidize, or interact with oxygen molecules, and damage cells.

Antioxidants can engage the free radicals before they do harm. Each antioxidant, from the anthocyanins and carotenoids to naphthols and lutein, is thought to protect against a certain kind of cell damage. Ascorbic acid and lycopene are thought to reduce DNA damage, while flavonoids are believed to reduce the production of free radicals in the first place, and phenolics may slow heart disease.

One of the great mysteries about antioxidants is whether they can work in isolation or whether their efficacy depends on their interactions with one another and perhaps with other substances.

Another is whether they can do harm: recent research showing that vitamins C and E, taken as supplements, may reduce the health benefits of exercise has cast a pall on antioxidant supplements.



And there's a third mystery: Is the disease-fighting capacity of fruits and vegetables directly attributable to antioxidants, or is it based on some other qualities or compounds in these foods?

Victoria Drake, a research associate at the Linus Pauling Institute at Oregon State University, said: "We know that antioxidant-rich foods can reduce the risk of chronic diseases, such as cardiovascular diseases. But evidence that very high doses of individual micronutrients or phytochemicals can do the same is inconsistent and relatively weak. A healthy diet is key; supplements should be used only as 'nutritional insurance.'"

A study in the May 29 issue of the journal *PLoS Genetics* raises the intriguing question of whether our bodies might benefit from some exposure to free radicals. Troy Idoner, who holds posts in the schools of medicine and engineering at the University of California at San Diego, has found in laboratory tests that limited exposure to oxidants may equip cells to better withstand larger exposures.

Most of the evidence on which antioxidants'

reputation is based comes from studies of isolated cells exposed to plant chemicals or from research on rats and mice. While much of the research is compelling, none of it shows how antioxidants actually affect human health.

In any case, Britz and Still both observe that while we have a hunch that antioxidants are good for us, in fact they're not clearly essential to our health. "They're not like vitamins," Britz notes. "They're not necessary in that you don't get a deficiency response if you don't have them."

Yet both continue their work with lettuce, believing that it might lead to development of plants whose high levels of antioxidants may help them grow better and withstand the degradations of shipping and storage.

And altering green lettuce's colors by bumping up the antioxidants might make for a prettier plant. "If the lettuce is more attractive," Britz muses, "people might eat more of it—and less of things that are bad for them."

THE WASHINGTON POST

## Strengthen your core

Ivy Ong-Wood

**EXERCISE DOESN'T ALWAYS mean sweating and getting breathless. You can stretch your way to getting fit too, using**

**Plates and Gyrotonic.**

Plates and Gyrotonic master Dorena Wayburne said. "The endgame is the same for both, although they each employ a distinct movement pattern in their exercise formats: to strengthen your core, otherwise known as the 'powerhouse' of muscles essential for fluid and efficient movement."

"After only a few sessions, you will start to walk taller, see your tummy tightened and as your muscles tone and your posture improves, your body takes on a leaner, sleeker shape."

Plates, developed by Joseph Pilates more than 80 years ago, aims to condition the entire body through proper alignment, constant concentration, control, precision, breathing, and flowing movement.

The same goes for Gyrotonic: Using dance, gymnastics, martial arts and swimming movements, this exercise system, developed by Juliu Horvath over the past 30 years, involves large circular movements under various forms of resistance.

One of the places you can try the two out is Iso Fit, the city's first Plates and

Gyrotonic studio. The studio is full of Gyrotonic equipment, including the pulley tower combination unit. Plates learners will appreciate the

Reformer, which uses mainly spring resistance.

For more information, call 2899-8630.

The studio is on the 9th Floor, California Tower, 30-32 D'Agular Street, Lan Kwai Fong, Central. [ivyonglingnews.com](http://ivyonglingnews.com)



## Avoiding burnout is key to handling stress

Hannah Cho

**FEELING STRESSED, OVERWORKED** and burned out? You're not alone. Layoffs have left so-called survivors with increased workloads and other challenges, according to a new survey of more than 4,400 workers by CareerBuilder.com.

Nearly half of the workers said they have taken on more responsibility because of a layoff, while 37 percent said they are handling the work of two people. The survey also found that 34 percent of workers are spending more time at the office, and 22 percent are working more weekends.

Says Jennifer Grize, a spokeswoman at CareerBuilder: "When you have workers who

are stressed and burned out, they're not going to be performing at the same level."

So how do you remain sane and healthy amid the rising work demands?

• **Take time to recharge:** Another CareerBuilder survey found that 35 percent of 4,400 workers said they haven't gone on or aren't planning to take a vacation this year. Nearly one in five workers said they're either afraid of losing their jobs or feel guilty about being away. That's crazy, Grize agrees. "Workers need to recharge. It's



counterproductive not to take the time off. Take a day off to take care of yourself. Or take a lunch break.

• **Prioritize your tasks:** If you have more than one project to handle, talk to your supervisor about work expectations. Get feedback on what you should tackle first. "So that it doesn't

feel like 10 things have to get done in one day," Grize says.

• **Cut the e-leads:** When you're on vacation, don't check your e-mail or voicemail. Says Grize: "You need the time to get away from the office, recharge

and bring the stress levels down so that when you come back, you could tackle projects more effectively. Turn off electronic devices to signal the end of the workday."

• **Consider flexible work arrangements:** Many employers are allowing telecommuting and compressed workweeks options so that workers can better balance personal and work lives.


• **Try to ignore rumors:** It's easier said than done as workers become increasingly wary about their job security. But getting caught up with gossip can also distract you from work. If your concerns are serious enough, talk to your supervisor or human resources to set your mind at ease.

THE BALTIMORE SUN

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# Strengthen your core

**Ivy Ong-Wood**



**EXERCISE DOESN'T ALWAYS** mean sweating and getting breathless. You can stretch your way to getting fit too, using Pilates and Gyrotonic.


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