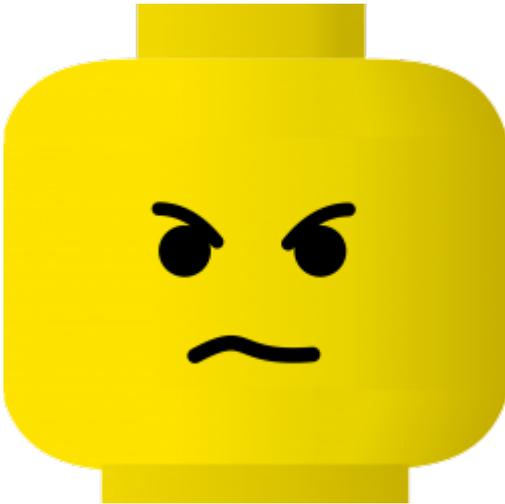


# Junk or Joke Science? Too Hard To Tell With This Study



By Jamie Wells, M.D. — November 28, 2018



Credit: Pixabay [1]

A multi-center team of six pediatricians in the UK and Australia clearly have way too much time on their hands. They just published a “[study](#) [2]” in which they, the authors, each ingested tiny yellow Lego head toy parts and foraged through their own stools to determine transit time to excretion. Why? Apparently, to be able to assuage parental anxiety when children do the same.

## Is this a joke or junk?

It appears to be both. First, six participants does not a fruitful study make. Second, the adult gut is distinct from the pediatric one so extrapolating meaningfully is problematic. Third, this Lego head figurine is a smooth plastic round small object that is unlikely to do harm unless inhaled or lodged in a precarious spot for a protracted period - unlike hazardous foreign bodies like batteries that corrode or sharp pieces that can puncture or perforate anatomy. No study is required to reiterate what is endlessly known by a seasoned practitioner and enough literature to date. Also, the researchers conclusions on male and female differences are without merit given the void of statistical significance with a sample set of three each.

As per humor, the [New York Post](#) [3] seemed to enjoy the data collection systems used due to thematic consistency: Stool Hardness and Transit (SHAT) plus Found and Retrieved Time (FART) scores. To each his own on the hilarity (or lack thereof) front.

## Why is this study annoying?

With limited resources in the healthcare realm despite the inconsequential exercise that is this paper, the piece was still published in the *Journal of Paediatrics and Child Health*, took time to

prepare and added nothing to the field that would alter a pediatrician's management of foreign body ingestion. The Lego head passed through these adults in 1-3 days without complication. These transit times are no great epiphany.

This low-hanging fruit for publication reminds me of another permutation of wasted science. For further insight, read [2.6 Million Studies On Exercise And Mental Health Weren't Enough, So Government Did One More](#) [4].

**While this paper has little utility, the topic of foreign body ingestion is highly relevant.**

Foreign body ingestion and inhalation through accidental or intentional trauma represent a large chunk of the preventable injury healthcare burden - which is not only costly in monetary terms but also in degrees of anguish and often unnecessary suffering. Though the items and circumstances vary, no age is spared.

To learn more, review my series on Inanimate Objects In Orifices ([eyes](#) [5], [ear/nose/throat](#) [6], [penis](#) [7], [vagina](#) [8], [anus/rectum](#) [9]) and [Animate Objects in Orifices: The Airway](#) [10].

To learn more about the dangerous and preventable, click on these links:

- [As Far As Ingesting Foreign Objects Go, Magnets Worse Than Many](#) [11]
- ['Drunk' Babies? No More Partying In Your Crib!](#) [12]
- [Snorting Condoms And Other Really, Really Bad Ideas](#) [13]
- [Accidental Or Intentional, Tide Pods Meant For Laundry Not Mouths.](#) [14]
- [An Article NOT About The Election](#) [15]
- [Stuff Not To Do With Your Penis](#) [16]

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**Source URL:** <https://www.acsh.org/news/2018/11/28/junk-or-joke-science-too-hard-tell-study-13626>

#### Links

[1] <https://pixabay.com/en/toy-yellow-smiley-head-man-face-37722/>

[2] <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/jpc.14309#reference>

[3] <https://nypost.com/2018/11/27/scientists-ate-lego-to-see-how-long-itd-take-to-poop-them-out/>

[4] <https://www.acsh.org/news/2018/08/09/26-million-studies-exercise-and-mental-health-werent-enough-so-government-did-one-more-13291>

[5] <https://www.acsh.org/news/2016/09/06/inanimate-objects-orifices-eye-10121>

[6] <https://www.acsh.org/news/2016/09/02/inanimate-objects-orifices-9964>

[7] <https://www.acsh.org/news/2016/09/12/penis-urethra-inanimate-objects-orifices-10145>

[8] <https://www.acsh.org/news/2016/09/25/vagina-inanimate-objects-orifices-10213>

[9] <https://www.acsh.org/news/2018/06/04/anus-rectum-objects-orifices-13046>

[10] <https://www.acsh.org/news/2018/02/28/animate-objects-orifices-airway-12645>

[11] <https://www.acsh.org/news/2017/09/26/far-ingesting-foreign-objects-go-magnets-worse-many-11873>

[12] <https://www.acsh.org/news/2017/03/30/drunken-babies-no-more-partying-your-crib-11067>

[13] <https://www.acsh.org/news/2018/04/02/snorting-condoms-and-other-really-really-bad-ideas-12786>

[14] <https://www.acsh.org/news/2018/01/14/accidental-or-intentional-tide-pods-meant-laundry-not-mouths-12413>

[15] <https://www.acsh.org/news/2016/11/14/article-not-about-election-10433>

[16] <https://www.acsh.org/news/2017/08/03/stuff-not-do-your-penis-11648>