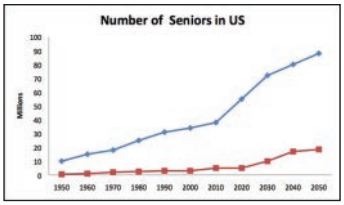
Tempus Fugit

Age-related macular degeneration (AMD) is a "model" multifactorial disease (see the Review article in the October issue by Chen and colleagues), undergoing investigation from a number of modern biomedical perspectives, including pharmacogenomics. In addition, the "age-related" aspect signifies that the disease will become more prevalent in the coming decades as baby boomers begin to reach the age of 65. The **National Eye Institute** (NEI) offers a list of facts about AMD and its risk factors (http://www.nei.nih.gov/health/maculardegen/armd_facts.asp); although the site is written to educate the public about the disease, the "model" characteristics of AMD can also be scanned from the NEI site into a snapshot of our aging population and ramifications for biomedical research. A more direct portrayal of our aging population can be found in the statistics offered by the Department of Health & Human Services **Administration on Aging** (http://www.aoa.gov/AoARoot/Aging_Statistics/index.aspx). Social and biomedical descriptions of the US population intersect in a variety of interesting ways, as is evident in the **Older Americans** PowerPoint slides (http://www.agingstats.gov/Agingstatsdotnet/Main_Site/default.aspx). There is also a video of a speech given by AoA Assistant Secretary Kathy Greenlee, stressing the threat posed by the country's shortage of geriatric specialists.



Podcasts

As useful as audiobooks on CD are, you might not find much in the way of entertainment that is also educational. Podcasts, however, are a medium through which one can learn while doing other things—except driving with one's earbuds in place. We present a few of our favorites, all of which convey useful science information guaranteed to break the ice at parties. My favorite happens to be ***Science***'s podcasts, all of which are available at http://www.sciencemag.org/site/multimedia/podcast/index.xhtml. ***Nature***'s podcasts (http://www.nature.com/nature/podcast/) lately have included such offerings such as tracing gene families back more than a billion years, historical theories of embryonic development, and the "taste of lab-reared meat." More humorous is the podcast available from the British ***Wired*** Web site (www.wired.co.uk/podcast). Podcast #007 is quite interesting. It contains their predictions for science and technology in 2011. All of these podcasts can be subscribed to through an **iTunes** account (www.apple.com/itunes/), and, of course, they are free. The **Naked Scientists** (please don't ask me whether videocasts are available) offer a fun array of choices (http://www.thenakedscientists.com/HTML/podcasts/) that will appeal to the die-hard and nonspecialist alike. How to blow out candles around a corner, why helium changes one's voice, and "getting paralysed people riding and rowing" are a few of the disparate (but, nonetheless, interesting) topics available. Still not enough? Check out the **100 Killer iTunes Feeds for Serious Science Geeks** (http://bit.ly/571u5s). Ranging from general feeds to more specialized ones, such as biology and health, chemistry, technology, and astronomy, the committed podcast listener can fill up time as they fill up gel wells.

Cool Science

The Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI) offers a Web site, **Cool Science** (http://www.hhmi.org/coolscience/index.html), designed to attract the attention of non-scientists, those not yet deeply trained in science, and youngsters curious about what scientists do. Teachers will also find useful resources for "extension learning." The site is a wonderful collection of Careers in Science, the 2010 Holiday Lectures (this year the talks are virus related: breaking epidemic cycles, solving virus mysteries, etc.), Top Ten Questions (for example, "are stem cells evenly distributed in an adult tissue or do they have specific places?", or, a bit out of context, "can excruciatingly foul odors result in an autonomic reaction that causes a person to faint?"), and very much more. The Web site gets high marks for well-executed design and for offering subjects of wide interest. Indeed, the success of this site can be reduced to two things: a sophisticated look designed to provoke curiosity and the demonstration of multiple areas in which science is inherent in, or applicable to, daily life.