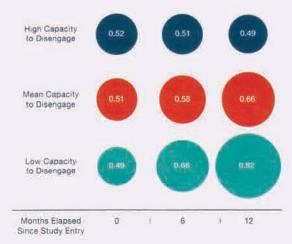


her circle. When he heard this, Special Agent Tommy Ray, a state law heer in Polk County, Fla., got inspired. Two years later, he made his own ak of cards [39], each bearing information about a different local criminal e that had gone cold. He distributed the decks in the Polk County jail. Is hunch was that prisoners would gossip about the cases during card mes, and somehow clues or breaks would emerge and make their way to authorities. The plan worked. Two months in, as a result of a tip from ard-playing informant, two men were charged with a 2004 murder in a se that had gone cold.

In July of this year, the idea took off: all state inmates in Florida now we access to two different decks of cards, describing a total of 104 cold ses. In mid-October, based on a tip from an informant at the Columbia prectional Institutional Annex in Lake City, the police arrested a man connection with a Fort Myers murder in 2004. The informant requested reward money. Plans are now in the works to make decks of cards for Florida county jails. And police departments elsewhere in the country instituting similar programs.

lack Levin, a sociologist and criminologist at Northeastern University to has written a book on gossip, is cautious about declaring the cards

QUITTING CAN BE GOOD FOR YOU CHART BY CYBU RICHLI



Estimated Amount of C-Reactive Protein in Mg/L

a success. "This is a clever experiment," he says. But to know if it works he goes on, "you'd need to put some fake cases in there, to know how the inmates respond to those. Right now, this will solve a case here and a case there, but at a huge cost of wild-goose chases, paperwork, false hope and even the possibility of false convictions."

Of the 66 tips he has received, Ray says he is confident about 15 and excited about 4. "These cases are cold," he says. "Any information is better than no information." RICHARD MORGAN

outting can be good for you America is a success-minded nation. Perseverance is practically a national resource. Posters of mountain climbers that read "Winners Never Quit, and Quitters Never Win" might as well be state-mandated signage in grade-school classrooms. But new research suggests that success — or more specifically, the persistence required to achieve hard-to-reach goals — may not be worth it.

In a paper published in the September issue of the journal Psychological Science, Gregory Miller of the University of British Columbia and Carsten Wrosch of Concordia University found that teenage girls who are unable to disengage themselves from trying to attain hard-to-reach goals exhibited increased levels of the inflammatory molecule C-reactive protein (C.R.P.), which in adults is linked with diabetes, heart disease and early aging [46]. "There's this traditional idea in Western culture and science literature that being persistent is good, that if you work hard, you can achieve anything," says Miller, who has published several papers with Wrosch on the psychology of quitting, "Our take is that persistence is good, but there are times where the most adaptive thing is to say, "This goal is not going to work out."

At the outset of their experiment, Miller and Wrosch asked each teenage subject what would count for her as adversity and what would count as success. Then the researchers tracked how the young women dealt with their own setbacks and adversity over the course of a year. What mattered, it turned out, was not whether the subjects achieved success but what they had to endure to get there. "We found that the girls who were best able to disengage when a goal became difficult or unattainable are those who have constant levels of C.R.P.," Miller says. Teenagers who persisted — even if they eventually attained their goals — had significantly elevated levels. "Success in some cases is going to be costly," he adds.

None of this is to say that persistence is a bad thing — just that too much of it can be unhealthy. "The million-dollar question," Miller says, "is where that exact tipping point is." GRAY BISEN