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INTERNATIONAL

Editorials	83	Modern treatment of heart failure Adam D Timmis
	84	Primary health care for the single homeless P V Powell
	85	Submucous cleft palate A L H Moss, R W Piggott, K J Jones
	86	Regular Review: Prospects for vaccines against HIV Arie J Zuckerman
News	89-94	Suicides at Risley · Miss Pauline Bousquet's appeal · Prenatal screening · Olympus · Next BMA secretary · Preimplantation diagnosis · Social services committee again · Stroke consensus · BMA and MPs repeat pleas for more NHS funds · Nine to five doctors?
Papers	95	The case for low dose diuretics in hypertension: comparison of low and conventional doses of cyclopenthiazide Gary McVeigh, David Galloway, Dennis Johnston
	99	Incidence of symptoms and AIDS in 146 Swedish haemophiliacs and blood transfusion recipients infected with human immunodeficiency virus Johan Giesecke, Gianpaolo Scialia-Tomba, Ove Berglund, Erik Berntorp, Sam Schulman, Lennart Stigendal
	102	Adhesive <i>Escherichia coli</i> in inflammatory bowel disease and infective diarrhoea D A Burke, A T R Axon
	105	Poor sulphoxidation ability in patients with food sensitivity G K Scadding, R Ayesh, J Brostoff, S C Mitchell, R H Waring, R L Smith
	107	Obstetric importance, diagnosis, and management of fetal tachycardias Darryl J Maxwell, Diane C Crawford, Paul V M Curry, Michael J Tynan, Lindsey D Allan
	110	The serotonin type 3 receptor antagonist BRL 43694 and nausea and vomiting induced by cisplatin James Carmichael, Brian M J Cantwell, Cathryn M Edwards, W Garth Rapoport, Adrian L Harris
	111	Injuries caused by handcuffs P W Richmond, L J Fligelstone, E Lewis
	112	Employment outside the NHS of doctors registered in the United Kingdom J P Nicholl, B T Williams
	104	Correction: Does low entry of cystic duct predispose to stones in the common bile duct? P C Bornman and others
Practice Observed	113	Can audit improve patient care? Effects of studying use of digoxin in general practice Caroline M Anderson, Sue Chambers, Margaret Clamp, Ian A Dunn, Mike F McGhee, Keith R Sumner, Andrew M Wood
	114	Correction: Rational decisions in managing sore throat: evaluation of a rapid test P Burke and others
Middles	115	The MD and MS degrees in Britain I C McManus
	117	Letter from Bombay: An unmitigated tragedy Sunil K Pandya
	120	How to set up a coronary rehabilitation programme H J N Bethell
	122	ABC of Eyes: Injuries to the eye A R Elkington, P T Khaw
	126	Consensus Conference: Treatment of stroke
	129-150	Obituary · Correspondence · BMA Affairs · Notes · Medicine and Books · Personal View · Minerva · (in detail overleaf)

CONTENTS *pages 129-150*

129 Obituary

T McKeown, T H Howell, A B Gilroy, F Lées, S K Huq

131 Correspondence

131 Euthanasia
Jean Davies

131 Outpatient consultations
E Glen, FRCS; R W Griffiths, FRCS

132 Funding and patient care in Scotland
Sir George Godber, FRCP

132 Diuretics in the elderly
S D Slater, FRCP, and others; K J Taylor, MRCP, and M L D Chaudhuri, MRCP; R Sulkava, MD, and T Erkinjuntti

133 Seizing the initiative on compensation
A Simanowitz

133 Bovine spongiform encephalopathy
H F Baker, MSC, and R M Ridley, PhD; T A Holt, MB, and J Phillips, BSC; R L Bishop, BA

134 Vocational training in general practice
S E Josse, FRCGP

134 Intravenous volume replacement
K J Power, FFRACPS

134 Low birth weight and hypertension
D J P Barker, FRCP, and C Osmond, PhD

135 Healthy cities
J Womersley, FFCM, and others

135 Low dose heparin and caesarean section
D H Tayler, FFRACPS

135 Restraining infants in cars
P M Sharples, MRCP, and others

135 Psychiatric illness among British Afro-Caribbeans
R Littlewood, MRCPsych, and M Lipsedge, FRCPsych

136 Undergraduate medical education
B Jolly

136 BMA Malta branch
B I Hoffbrand, FRCP

136 Subscriptions to defence organisations
A B Shrank, FRCP

137 Points Treating claudication (M C Hobday; B Maurer); Treating the discharging ear (R G Walker; H O L Williams; N B Solomons and G J Madden); Penicillamine nephropathy (C L Hall); Anorexia nervosa and the elderly (R H Ratnasuriya); Cardiovascular risk factors (A StJ Dixon); Sunbed lentigines (H C Williams and others); Management of asthma in hospital (A G Arnold); Cervical cytology screening (L S Lewis)

138 BMA Affairs

138 LMC Conference

141 Annual Representative Meeting

142 Dealing with hospital complaints

143 Notes

144 Medicine and Books

144 Sir Richard Bayliss: *New Prospects for Medicine* (Ed J M Austyn)

145 P Morris Jones: *Major Topics in Adolescent Oncology* (Ed C K Tebbi)

145 D A Heath: *Osteoporosis: Etiology, Diagnosis, and Management* (Ed B L Riggs, L J Melton III)

146 N E F Cartlidge: *Memory Disorders in Clinical Practice* (N Kapur)

146 Clifford Hawkins: What's new in the new editions?

145 Selection

149 Personal View It is not one of "them"; it is one of all of us Ian Verber

150 Minerva

BMJ EDITOR'S CHOICE

With all the self agonising about Britain's colonial past we tend to forget the legacy of free speech and investigative journalism in some of the now independent countries. Nowhere is this more vivid than in the world's largest democracy, India, and at p 117 are summarised the full and frank findings of a government investigation into deaths from contaminated glycerol in JJ Hospital, Bombay. "There is much that is rotten in our [Indian] system of institutional medical care," Pandya concludes. And who would have predicted any correspondence at all, let alone three letters, aroused by a recent "For debate"

feature on bovine spongiform encephalopathy (p 133)? Fortunately it seems that the new regulations will cut down the already remote risk (of a very nasty disease) even further. At the end of the week celebrating the 40th anniversary of the NHS Sir George Godber, a great if not the greatest chief medical officer, returns to showing how much more generously the north of the border has been treated compared with the south. "There are good reasons why Scotland should have been given more in the early years," he emphasises (p 132), "but they do not justify pushing England even farther behind."