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EDITOR'S CHOICE

BMJ

Testing received wisdom and turning over dogma is at the heart of science, making science a fine activity for revolutionaries and scientific journals much more exciting than television chat shows. In today's journal dogma is under attack. Fibre, a fashionable panacea of the 1970s, suffers yet another setback (p 707), while the practice of inducing pregnant women at 42 weeks' gestation is further undermined by new data (p 715). Meanwhile, a general practitioner surveys the evidence and shows that—in contrast to current recommendations—it may not be necessary to give anti-D immunoglobulin to women having a spontaneous abortion in the first trimester of pregnancy (p 732).

Yet one of the central activities of science—the international conference—is also criticised in a low key way. S K Pandya, our Bombay correspondent, quotes a friend on why he refused an invitation to an international meeting on leprosy (p 746): "On the pavement I see some of our leprosy patients settling for the night. This evening one was spreading a sheet to rest his limbs, another was lighting his last cigarette before he turned in for the night, the third was staring into space. . . . I ask myself in what way my going overseas will be of any use to them and the answer comes: 'In no way.'"