



BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL NO 6659 VOLUME 297

INTERNATIONAL

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## EDITOR'S CHOICE

BMJ

You might think that the obvious statistical associations between habits and disease have all been answered, but in this week's issue a team from The Netherlands suggests that keeping pet birds is an independent risk for lung cancer (p 1319). Given the popularity of birdkeeping in Britain, perhaps the MRC should look at the problem here, though

there may well be national differences in all sorts of aspects. The differences that can exist even within a region are shown by a survey of the "fiercely independent" ethics committees in Wessex; their variability in composition and procedures surely adds weight to the call for a national ethics committee (p 1333).