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EDITOR'S CHOICE

BMJ

Physicians in ivory towers sometimes sigh for rigorous trials of alternative medicine, usually in vain. But this week we have one: an examination of the century old thesis that many diseases show themselves in the iris (p 1578). A Netherlands blinded case-control study of five iridologists showed that it was not a valid test for diagnosing gall bladder disease—and at 60% even the consistency between two iridologists was only just better than by chance. More down to earth (and worrying) is the confusion over hospital internal

emergency numbers: there was “minimal uniformity” among the 72 northern hospitals in Dr Mark Davies's survey, and only one used 999 (p 1606); surely a *national* health service could do better. And anxieties over bonding between parent and baby are well brought out this week, by Professor John Davies over the polarities between grief and happiness in the loss of a twin (p 1613) and Adrienne Baker's description of interrupted bonding imposed by early admission to hospital (p 1623).