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BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL NO 6666 VOLUME 298

INTERNATIONAL

Editorials

- 63 **Violence in general practice**
Andrew Harris
- 64 **Chancroid**
A Mindel
- 65 **Causes of the haemolytic uraemic syndrome**
J Kavi, R Wise
- 66 **School refusal**
Jim Watters
- 67 **The solitary pulmonary nodule**
Duncan M Geddes, Mark Elliott
- 68 **Industrial accidents**
Tar-Ching Aw, J Malcolm Harrington
- 69 **Primary health care: the next steps**
Simon Barley
- 70 **Golden Anniversary of the "British Heart Journal"**
Howard B Burchell

News

- 71-74 **Psychology of disasters · Doctors' duty to society · Westminster and Chelsea Hospital · Occupational hazards · Children with stomas · When government chickens out · Leaks on NHS review**

Papers

- 75 **Predisposing factors for cerebral infarction: the Oxfordshire community stroke project**
P A G Sandercock, C P Warlow, L N Jones, I R Starkey
- 80 **Randomised controlled trial of interferon alfa (lymphoblastoid interferon) in chronic non-A non-B hepatitis**
M R Jacyna, M G Brooks, R H T Loke, J Main, I M Murray-Lyon, H C Thomas
- 82 **Coated mesalazine (5-aminosalicylic acid) versus sulphasalazine in the treatment of active ulcerative colitis: a randomised trial**
D Rachmilewitz on behalf of an international study group
- 87 **Genetics of obesity in adult adoptees and their biological siblings**
Thorkild I A Sørensen, R Arlen Price, Albert J Stunkard, Fini Schulsinger
- 90 **Absence from school related to children's and parental smoking habits**
Anne Charlton, Valerie Blair
- 93 **Life threatening interaction between tamoxifen and warfarin**
P Tenni, D L Lalich, M J Byrne
- 93 **Gastric explosion: a cautionary tale**
J J Earnshaw, T K Keane
- 94 **Ethnic differences in birth statistics from central Birmingham**
R Griffiths, M White, M Stonehouse
- 95 **Autoimmunity: a risk factor for allosensitisation to blood products?**
A S Wierzbicki, D M Cousins
- 96 **Treatment of itching in atopic eczema with antihistamines with a low sedative profile**
V Doherty, D G H Sylvester, C T C Kennedy, S G Harvey, J G Calthrop, J R Gibson

Practice Observed

- 97 **Aggression and the general practitioner**
Paul D'Urso, Richard Hobbs

Middles

- 99 **Large outbreak of food poisoning caused by *Salmonella typhimurium* definitive type 49 in mayonnaise**
E Mitchell, M O'Mahony, D Lynch, L R Ward, B Rowe, A Uttley, T Rogers, D G Cunningham, R Watson
- 102 **Risks of dependence on benzodiazepine drugs:**
The importance of patient selection
Peter Tyrer
A major problem of long term treatment
Heather Ashton
Editorial comment
Peter Rubin
- 105 **Boxing and the brain**
J A N Corsellis

- 110-132 **Obituary · Correspondence · BMA Affairs · Notes · Personal Views · Medicine and Books · Minerva · (in detail overleaf)**

CONTENTS pages 101-132

101 Fillers

101 Any Questions Alan Scott (101); David A C Elliman; J M S Pearce (109)

110 Obituary

C G Clark, E A Hoare, D W Anniss, K N Irvine, H W Ireland, P M C Camm, C R M Redwood, R L Hill, Ishbel Hession, F E Aaron, P K Sahu, F Heyes

113 Correspondence

- | | |
|---|--|
| 113 Sex and the mentally handicapped
Alison Davis | 118 Hyperprolactinaemia
M A Baxter, PHD, and others |
| 113 Radiotherapy's second setback
Mary Catterall, FRCR; J S Tobias, FRCR; A Green, FRCS | 118 Defence subscriptions for general practitioners
H M Halle |
| 114 Monitoring during sedation for endoscopy
Anna S Carter, FFARCS, and others | 118 From the other side of the fence
Mary Anne Griffiths, MRCPsych |
| 114 Differential defence rates
R J Aitken, FRCS; C W E Redman, MRCOG, and E J Buxton, MRCOG; P Diggory, MRCP; R F Cooper, MRCM | 118 Iron and folate supplements during pregnancy
D J Swinhoe, MRCOG, and others |
| 115 Use of hospital beds
P McHugh, FFARCS, and K A Milligan, FFARCI | 119 Health effects of Chernobyl
S Dutton and F Harris, FRCPED |
| 115 Care of accident victims
C M Court-Brown, FRCS; A D Scott, FRCS; K C Easton | 119 Aspirin for strokes and transient ischaemic attacks
P Sandercock, MRCP |
| 116 A surgical thought on disaster relief
P J Guy, FRCSed | 119 Monitoring and the sudden infant death syndrome
B M Wright, MRCP |
| 116 DF-2 infection
A J Westwell, FIMLS, and others | 119 Passive smoking at work
J T Carter |
| 117 Luteinising hormone in polycystic ovary syndrome
Elaine Turner, MB, and M C White, MRCP; R Homburg, MB, and H S Jacobs, FRCP | 120 Causes of "natural" sudden death
H A Fleming, FRCP |
| 117 Is there a genetic factor in flecainide toxicity?
A G Stuart, MRCP, and others | 120 Why the government will not abolish the Medical Practices Committee
D Parsons, MRCP |
| | 120 Pet birds as a risk factor for lung cancer
K P Jones, MPHIL, and others |
| | 120 That condor moment?
E W Benbow, MRCPATH, and others |

121 BMA Affairs

- 121 Unanimous support for reduction in juniors' hours
123 Strengthening the BMA in the regions
124 BMA checklist for government's NHS review

125 Notes

127 Personal View

- 127 Lockerbie Ian B Pearson
128 What have I become? David M Lewis

129 Medicine and Books

- 129 R J Evans: *Cambridge History of Medicine. "Professional and Popular Medicine in France, 1770-1830. The Social World of Medical Practice."* (M Ramsey. Series editors C Webster, C Rosenberg)
130 J B P Stephenson: *The Child with Febrile Seizures* (S J Wallace)
130 Peter Maguire: *I Don't Know What to Say. How to Help and Support Someone Who is Dying* (R Buckman)
131 Mike Pringle: *Life and Death Decision Making* (B A Brody)
131 G G Browning: *Dilemmas in Otorhinolaryngology* (Ed D F N Harrison)

132 Minerva

EDITOR'S CHOICE

BMJ

We shall have to wait a little before we can look at the medical lessons learnt at this week's tragic air crash near the M1 and East Midlands airport. By all accounts the medical care was exemplary, but probably similar psychological problems will arise in the rescue workers and relatives as they did in last year's Lockerbie disaster (p 127). The debate about the management of major injuries from other causes, particularly road accidents, goes on with the role of special units, district general hospitals, and immediate care all being emphasised (pp 115-6). At least in the West disaster relief is not plagued by politics, as it may be in the Third World (p 116). Elsewhere in

this week's *BMJ* two other types of violence are featured—the ritualised form of boxing, often called a sport and so well portrayed by George Bellas's paintings on show at several American galleries (p 105), and the assaults on general practitioners and their staff (p 63 and p 97). It takes a historian to put all this into perspective, and Professor R J Evans reminds us in his book review that under the ancien régime in France licences to practise medicine were given not only to university trained physicians and barber surgeons but also to bone setters, herbalists, apothecaries, monks, and even executioners (p 129).