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EDITOR'S CHOICE

BMJ

The disease of the decade for the world is obviously AIDS, a disease that will kill millions, but for the British it must be closely followed by myalgic encephalomyelitis, a disease that some doctors do not believe exists. Both are present in this week's journal. A report from outlying Malawi shows how HIV infection is making a huge impact on the work of an already overstretched hospital (p 1567), while more than half of a national sample of general practitioners in Britain agree or tend to agree with the statement that "I have insufficient knowledge to manage patients with AIDS" (p 1563). Almost 40 people have written to us (p 1577) annoyed by Caroline Richmond's article

questioning the diagnosis of myalgic encephalomyelitis. "Medicine," says Ms Hartnell, "might be losing its soul to the strangely inhumane and ignorant treatment of people whereby they are virtually put on trial because they have presented with certain symptoms. . . ." Caroline Richmond approached myalgic encephalomyelitis through a historical analysis, emphasising the living importance of medical history. John Gabbay argues on p 1588 that doctors need to rewrite their history, and he lists the historical errors that doctors make. This account paves the way for his articles in July showing how medicine as we know it appeared during the French Revolution.