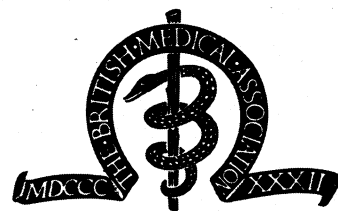


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EDITOR'S CHOICE

BMJ

One of the many topics skimmed over in the white paper is obstetrics. Professor Geoffrey Chamberlain paints a frightening scenario of what will happen if managers are allowed to get their way looking for quick financial returns (p 1702). Small units will go to the wall, as may even the medium sized ones, and intensive care may suffer either from staff shortages in overcrowded central units or in trying to cash in by using inexperienced doctors and nurses in small ones. What's more, with their long tradition of audit obstetricians know better than most of us about the misuse

of performance indicators. At a time that has seen the re-emergence of botulism (p 1669) communicable diseases are in the news again, with falciparum malaria on the increase (p 1730). And, equally depressing, a team from St George's has found that 106 of 173 children admitted consecutively were incompletely immunised, whether because of parental objections, apathy, or inappropriate professional advice (p 1687). Those who believe in the unrealistically high rates of immunisation proposed in the white paper should think again.