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## EDITOR'S CHOICE

# BMJ

It's not too often that a medical book review makes you want to drop everything and buy the book. But Mark Farrington's notice of a biography of Robert Koch provokes just that response (p 334)—and the picture of Frau Koch looking out for approaching clouds is unforgettable. Elsewhere we are reminded of the origins of German excellence—where in 1889 school attendance was universal and compulsory up to the age

of 14 for boys, followed by obligatory evening classes to 17 (p 293). Two articles from Oxford and Bucks show just how difficult it's going to be to monitor hospital referrals from general practice, whatever the politicians say (p 304). And, finally, some encouraging news from India, where an eight year old eradication programme has cut the number of villages endemic for guinea worm by three fifths (p 336).