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EDITOR'S CHOICE

BMJ

Why does it take all of us so long between having something demonstrated and applying the new knowledge? Obvious examples are the dangers of cigarette smoking and contaminated food, but further ones are provided in this week's *BMJ*. Despite article on article about the faults of medicine as seen by the patient, or the relative, the anonymous Personal View, for instance, raises the question whether anybody cared about what went on in this particular intensive care unit (p 401). And then there are the positive findings which could benefit patient care or save money, or both. Up to a quarter

of all ovarian cancers could be prevented by prophylactic oophorectomy, yet only 11% of practising gynaecologists answered a questionnaire "correctly" about this (p 404). An Oxford team has shown yet again that most gynaecological emergencies needing laparotomy can be managed by the cheaper and pleasanter laparoscopy (p 371). Finally, "many anaesthetics are still given without the benefit of simple, cheap, proved aids to safety . . . let alone to the sensible standards of perioperative monitoring recommended" (p 388). Thank God for the fine weather to raise morale.