

R31. B55

BMJ

1840-1990

1 SATURDAY 15 DECEMBER 1990



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EDITOR'S CHOICE

BMJ

Christmas is a time when our society pays slightly more attention than usual to the disadvantaged and then plunges into an orgy of shopping and drug taking. The disadvantaged, drug taking, and shopping are all represented in this week's journal. Almost half of those caring for a sample of elderly people admitted to some form of abuse of their charges, and the risk factor most often associated with physical abuse was alcohol consumption (p 1359). Researchers from Nottingham show on p 1379 that all but eight of 65 people with mental handicap were found to have an appreciable problem on screening and make a case for routine screening. Meanwhile Swiss researchers have found that drug misusing patients infected with HIV slow the progression of their disease if they stop injecting (p 1362). But even shopping may be dangerous: the

paper on p 1370 describes 10 children who presented to casualty in Aberdeen after falling from supermarket trolleys. Belt up in trolleys as well as on the road.

Remember Kenneth Clarke? He reappears on p 1383 in a revealing interview with John Roberts, an American journalist turned internist and epidemiologist. John spent two months burrowing into the depths of the NHS, and we will be carrying a series of articles from him after Christmas. He found much to praise and much to criticise. And did you think that football hooliganism was new? The *BMJ* actively campaigned against football in the nineteenth century and noted about one game, without mirth, that: "it is very unpleasant to read of young men being kicked to death, even though it is all done in a friendly way" (p 1378).