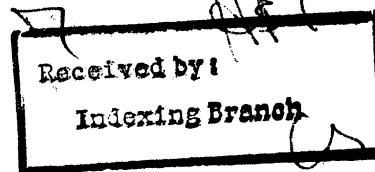


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EDITOR'S CHOICE

BMJ

Our coverage of the greatest upheaval in the NHS since it was founded continues this week with a thoughtful interview with the secretary of state (p 636) and an account of how a rural health district is handling the changes (p 641). Whether the reforms will make it easier for the health service to handle some of its more intractable problems—like underfunding (p 609) and “difficult to place” psychiatric patients (p 603)—remains to be seen.

But events at home mustn’t blind us to what happens abroad. A study from Japan suggests that extensive use of health screening in middle age may reduce the use of inpatient services by the elderly (p 615). If this turns out to be true our editorial

writers point out that it has profound implications for European health services (not to mention the GP contract in this part of Europe) (p 604). As the command economies of Eastern Europe crumble Gellert (an American) and Kaznady (a Soviet) describe how private-public joint ventures between Western capitalists and Soviet officials can improve the lot of Ukrainian women (p 633).

Not discriminating between Ukrainian women and others, our ABC of Antenatal Care starts this week (p 647). Elsewhere the debate over domiciliary visits heats up (p 655), and, for those who like the long view, George Dunea explains how science has disproved any effect of the moon on human behaviour (p 650).