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## EDITOR'S CHOICE

# BMJ

The paper by Martin Gardner and others suggesting that paternal exposure to radiation before conception was one factor causing childhood leukaemia was probably one of the most important that we have published in recent years. Today we publish further papers on the same issue. In a case-control study P A McKinney and others find that radiation was a factor, as was exposure to wood dust or benzene (p 681). As Peter Smith explains in an editorial (p 672), these results have to be interpreted cautiously, not least because of overlap of data with the paper of Martin Gardner and others. A study from Dounreay (p 687) fails to confirm the original findings but does throw up the possibility that the use of beaches around the

nuclear installation may be a factor in childhood leukaemia. A cool head is needed to make sense of all these findings, as it is when taking the lead on medical audit. And to help, Brian Ellis and Tom Sensky give one of the clearest guides yet on what audit is about (p 704). Neurology also calls for cool thinking and clarity but has a bizarre and almost mystical side. Nobody has exploited this better than Oliver Sacks, whom Trish Groves interviews on p 732. On the same page Fiona Godlee reviews the Hollywood film of his book on the initial treating with levodopa of patients with encephalitis lethargica. This condition follows autism (*Rain Man*) and cerebral palsy (*My Left Foot*) into the cinematic pantheon. Which disease will be next?