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EDITOR'S CHOICE

BMJ

Today we publish another paper from the Southampton group whose work is establishing the tremendous importance of events in fetal and neonatal life in determining adult health (p 671). This time the group shows that low birth weight is strongly linked with poor adult lung function. Many people have wondered whether this work is a scientific cul de sac, but it looks increasingly as if it's work of the highest importance. Stranger even than the idea of events in early life being dominant in determining adult health is the idea that antidepressants might simultaneously reduce depression but increase the likelihood of suicide. That this is the case has been suggested (and presented on prime time television in the United States) for the new antidepressant fluoxetine, but a meta-analysis on p 685

suggests that it is not true for either fluoxetine or tricyclic antidepressants. Our responses to *The Health of the Nation* continue with Hugh Tunstall-Pedoe arguing that the government's proposed target for reducing mortality from coronary artery disease is too conservative (p 701) and John Garrow making a strong case that obesity should be one of the government's key areas (p 704). Finally, Roy Carr-Hill and Jenny Morris call for rigorous validation of the quality measures used in calculating quality adjusted life years (p 699), and John Hobbs begins a new ABC—of vascular diseases—with an article on varicose veins, pointing out that two thirds of the British population will have a venous problem at some time (p 707).