



Editorials

- 1561 **Rationing: the search for sunlight** Richard Smith
The difficult choices when allocating resources among treatments, services, facilities, and patients should be made openly using rational criteria.
- 1562 **Physicians for Human Rights (UK)** Peter Hall
Active in Kashmir, Kuwait, South Africa, and Yugoslavia.
- 1563 **On lightning** Tony Smith
How to avoid being killed or injured by lightning, together with evidence that lightning can strike twice in the same place.
- 1564 **Aboriginal skeletons in the closet** Tony Delamothe
Museum curators should let Aboriginal people have back the remains of their forebears.

Underlying Medicine

- 1565 **Chaos – predicting the unpredictable** W J Firth
Chaos theory has stimulated important developments in the way we can interpret medical data.
- 1569 **Discovery in medicine** Arthur C Kennedy
What kind of person makes discoveries, what can be done to facilitate the process, and what factors determine how discoveries are implemented?
- 1572 **Economics, health, and the economics of health** Charles Normand
Scarcity and choice are not just theoretical problems in economics: they are a feature of the debate about health services everywhere.

Heroic Medicine

- 1578 **Hugh Owen Thomas: the cripple's champion** A J Carter
The principles of treating crippled children were established by Hugh Owen Thomas a century ago; his nephew Robert Jones made these principles acceptable to doctors.
- 1582 **First among women** Pierce Grace
Elizabeth Blackwell, the first woman to obtain a medical qualification, lived to see many other women follow in her footsteps and herself went on to found a medical school.
- 1583 **Death of a heart surgeon: reflections on press accounts of the murder of Victor Chang** Deborah Lupton, Simon Chapman
The murder of Victor Chang was not just the murder of any doctor, as media coverage showed; the press reports reflect the cultural connotations of doctors, medical technology, the body, and the heart.
- 1586 **Changing the hideous face of war** B J S Grogono
During the first world war Harold Gillies developed techniques of plastic surgery which his team at Rooksdown House continued during the second world war.

Historical Medicine

- 1589 **Vincent van Gogh's illness: acute intermittent porphyria?** Loretta S Loftus, Wilfred Niels Arnold
How did van Gogh's medical problems influence his painting, and what caused the problems?
- 1591 **Médecins Sans Frontières: 20 years old** Alexander Dorozynski
Twenty years ago Médecins Sans Frontières's first mission was to provide medical relief in flooded eastern Pakistan; now over a thousand staff a year go to 55 countries.
- 1593 **Garcia da Orta in Goa: pioneering tropical medicine** Ivan A D'Cruz
The science of tropical medicine can be traced back to 1563 and the publication of the first modern description of severe "Asiatic" cholera.
- 1594 **Goya's living skeleton** Richard H R Park, Maureen P Park
English caricaturists were fascinated by Claude Seurat, "the living skeleton," who visited London in 1825; Goya encountered him at a fair in Bordeaux the next year.
- 1596 **The Keppel Club (1952–74); lessons from the past for the future** John Fry
A think tank with an influence beyond its size, the Keppel Club remains a model for cross fertilisation of ideas.

Basic Medicine

- 1598 **Seeing for themselves** M J Kelly
Some applicants to medical school may be taking the path of least resistance; by seeing what medicine means as a career while still at school such candidates may make better choices.
- 1600 **In defence of eponyms** V Wright
Not all reasons for using eponyms are despicable, and those who use them need have no guilt complex.
- 1602 **Microbial flora on doctors' white coats** Derek Wong, K Nye, Pat Hollis
White coats are a potential source of cross infection – but how often should they be changed?
- 1604 **Do pathologists have extrasensory perception?** A D Bull, S S Cross, D S James, P B Silcocks
Divination is an integral part of the long history of medicine; at last the clairvoyant abilities of histopathologists are properly tested.
- 1605 **How to have a fever of unknown origin** Miles Burrows
Falling white cell counts, rising temperature, increasing weakness, and every possible investigation – and still no agreed diagnosis.
- 1606 **Give a drug a bad name** D B Jack, A J Soppitt
Choosing the right name can greatly help the marketing of a product, but choosing a good name has never been easy.
- 1608 **How heavy the patient?** Kirsten McKay, S Fozdar-Faroudi, Clive E Bowman
And how dependable the weighing device?

Domestic Medicine

- 1609 **Haemodynamic response in soccer spectators: is Scottish football exciting?**
A T Elder, S G Jyothinagaram, P L Padfield, T R D Day
Is Scottish football so deep in the doldrums that its fans can no longer be aroused?
- 1610 **Keeping the cat out of the bag: a hazard in continuous ambulatory peritoneal dialysis**
A J Makin, K A V Cartwright, R A Banks
Yet another way in which pets may endanger life and limb.
- 1611 **A potpourri of parasites in poetry and proverb** D A Burns
Many verses about fleas, lice, and scabies are very affectionate.
- 1614 **Modifying chickenpox** Eric Pennington, Sheila Pennington
Is there truth in the folklore that keeping patients with chickenpox cool reduces itching?
- 1615 **Countdown to the *BMJ*** Margaret Cooter
*A great many people and much high technology are needed to put the *BMJ* together, 51 times a year.*

Photo Finish

- 1620 **Antiscratch devices · Outpatient management of fractured femur · Stethoscope as teaching aid · An x ray film from 1910**

Cover **Chaos theory and medicine** David Ellis (see page 1565)

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EDITOR'S CHOICE

Doctors, as members of an ancient profession, sometimes feel threatened by new ideas and by people from outside medicine applying new ways of thinking to medicine. We see this currently with management and molecular biology. The sense of threat is understandable, but in the end medicine usually enriches itself by absorbing new ideas. Thus many doctors may not know much about chaos theory, which is probably one of the major intellectual developments of the century, but W J Firth provides an easy entry to this fascinating world and reflects on what it may offer to medicine (p 1565). Economics is another discipline that has turned its attention to health in recent years, and Charles Normand provides one of the clearest accounts yet of what economics can do for medicine (p 1572). It wasn't long ago that the newest and most outrageous idea around was that women might study medicine. In the words of a nineteenth century letter writer, "The deplorable fact is that [women] are so often careless

mothers, weak wives, poor housekeepers, ignorant nurses and frivolous human beings." Oddly enough, the author was Elizabeth Blackwell, the first woman to qualify as a doctor (p 1582). Connoisseurs of the *BMJ*'s Christmas issues will be in search of the bizarre as well as the erudite, and they will not be disappointed: there is a stethoscope that six people can use at once (p 1620); poems inspired by scabies mites, head lice, body lice, crab lice, fleas, and bedbugs (p 1611); and an ingenious experiment in which two scientifically minded doctors designed an outfit for a child which kept the two halves of his body at different temperatures to test the folklore that keeping a patient cool discourages the itching of chickenpox (p 1614). Finally, if you've ever wondered what it takes to put together an issue of the *BMJ* you can find out on p 1615. You'll discover that it takes 25 tonnes of paper, 230 kg of ink, and 4 km of wire for staples for us to wish you all happy Christmas.