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### The excitement of research and a place for anecdote

On p 508 a junior doctor describes candidly what he feels about research. "I could never understand the fascination that more senior doctors had with research. . . . Research was what my superiors did when they should have been teaching me." Many medical students and young doctors (and, indeed, many older doctors) feel like that about research, and it must be one of the major challenges for medical teachers to try to infuse their students with the excitement that research can generate. Once you've got the bug even football or Nintendo seems dull in contrast.

The junior doctor who wrote so disparagingly of research, Simon Wessely, is now himself a dedicated researcher, and in his short piece he describes the paper that made him change his mind about research. Lee Robins stumbled across the complete prewar records of local child guidance clinics, which were about to be destroyed, and then followed up the children. From her observations came vital observations on the roots of adult antisocial behaviour and also a beautifully written paper that inspired the young Wessely. Simon Wessely's short piece appears as one of our "fillers" (pieces we use to fill a page that ends short) entitled "A paper that changed my practice." We welcome other contributions

to this series or to other series entitled "A patient who changed my practice," "The one message I'd like to leave behind me," and "A memorable patient." Indeed, we will take anything that is short, interesting, and well written, and we have some excellent pieces lined up.

Publishing these short pieces is, we hope, a way to carry more anecdote in the journal without undermining its scientific standard. Anecdotes were the stuff of medical journals until recently—and still are for some—but it is usually impossible to conclude anything from them with confidence.

Another place where we can carry useful anecdotes in the journal is in our lesson of the week section. Here the aim is not to publish something original but rather to remind doctors of lessons that are neither so familiar as to be in every textbook nor so rare that it would matter little whether they knew the lesson or not. This week we publish two lessons of the week. One describes two patients with heavy metal poisoning caused by Indian ethnic remedies (p 506), and the other (p 507) teaches that all women with hyperprolactinaemia should be referred for computed tomography because some of those with mild hyperprolactinaemia may have macroadenomas.

**BMJ**

**Editor's  
Choice**