

BMJ



BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL NO 6885 VOLUME 306

INTERNATIONAL

Editorials

1079	Chickenpox during pregnancy Gwendolyn L Gilbert
1080	Restorative gardens Sam Bass Warner Jr, J H Baron
1081	A role for medical angiologists? C P Warlow
1082	Mental health problems at work Francis Creed
1083	"Self referral": a potential conflict of interest Peter Wilkinson
1084	Does cimetidine cause weight loss? John Garrow

News

1085-1090	Halcion edges back into Britain · WHO audit · Australian medical manpower · Polish blood donors strike · Anaesthetist may face manslaughter · Inappropriate house jobs · New Zealand bed charges · Multiple sclerosis · Syria accused of torture · Private funding, public fears · Violence to doctors
-----------	---

Papers

1091	Effect of cimetidine suspension on appetite and weight in overweight subjects Grethe Støa-Birketvedt
1093	Cimetidine suspension as adjuvant to energy restricted diet in treating obesity Michael Højby Rasmussen, Teis Andersen, Leif Breum, Peter C Gøtzsche, Jannik Hilsted
1096	Modified paediatric resuscitation chart Derek P Burke, David F Bowden
1098	Treatment of acute mountain sickness by simulated descent: a randomised controlled trial Peter Bärtsch, Beata Merki, Doris Hofstetter, Marco Maggiorini, Bengt Kayser, Oswald Oelz
1101	Relationship between adult victims of assault and children at risk of abuse Lisa Ward, Jonathan P Shepherd, Alan M Emond
1102	Should sewage workers and carers for people with learning disabilities be vaccinated for hepatitis A? C J M Poole, A T Shakespeare

General Practice

1103	Decision making by general practitioners in diagnosis and management of lower urinary tract symptoms in women Irwin Nazareth, Michael King
------	--

Education & Debate

1107	Why is the outcome of transient ischaemic attacks different in different groups of patients? Graeme J Hankey, Martin S Dennis, James M Slattery, Charles P Warlow
1112	Inappropriate publication of trial results and potential for allegations of illegal share dealing D S Freestone, H Mitchell
1114	For Debate: Gall stones: the real issues Alan G Johnson
1115	Helping people with dementia feel at home Stuart Handysides
1118	ABC of Sleep Disorders: Non-psychotropic drugs and sleep Chris Idzikowski, Colin M Shapiro

1121-1140	Obituary · Letters · Medicopolitical digest · Soundings · Personal View · Medicine and the Media · Medicine and Books · Minerva · (in detail overleaf)
-----------	---

CONTENTS *pages 1121-1140*

1121 **Obituary** T S Eimerl, G W Ayres, R M Millen, J M Fitton, H S Winsey, D Shaw, C M Cusden, A M Gordon

1123 Letters

1123 Diabetic care in general practice J Barratt; M Soler and R B Jones; M Pringle

1123 Primary prevention of neural tube defects with folic acid K Simister; C J Schorah and R W Smithells

1124 Designer hips R W Morris; J Buchanan

1124 Effective and acceptable treatment for depression T Hale; P Cialdella; R A Foulds; J Nakiely; M M Robertson and C L E Katona; H Freeman; P Madeley and J P Wattis; S Milne and others; T A Sheldon and others

1127 Unpublished data in drug advertisements D M Humphreys; D Massam

1127 Fluoridation of drinking water D A Breen and others; L Vaughan

1127 Women's perception of obstetric and gynaecological examinations J Menage

1128 Heart disease screening in Japanese children T Ino and others

1128 Drug misusers in Lothian M London and others

1128 Early infertility treatments derived from human pituitary N Pfeffer

1129 Parental irradiation and excess childhood leukaemia C Kalman

1129 Kidney donation after paracetamol overdose P A Andrews and C G Koffmann

1129 Screening for prostatic cancer M Matthysen and others

1130 Vaccines should be more environmentally stable S C Arya

1130 Medical details crucial for residential care T M Davies

1130 Infant mortality in Switzerland Ch E Minder and F Gurtner

1130 Trauma and mental health of children in Gaza F A Hein and others

1131 Mycobacteria in Crohn's disease J D Sanderson

1131 Increased risk of leukaemia in eating disorders likely to be small M R Howard

1131 Freezing assets to pay for long term care S G P Webster

1131 Asthma management guidelines P N Black; S Hewitt and B Winter; R Sporik; C Powell and others

1132 Hospital beds in London T Cheddells

1133 Medicopolitical Digest

No new money for Tomlinson · Task groups on GP discussion paper · Two year waits must be eliminated · Postgraduate medical education · Health and safety in the NHS · Consultants' appointments procedures

1135 **Soundings** Walking to school Tony Smith; Interview with a pioneer Bernard Dixon

1136 Personal view

Hoping to help Michael Loudon; Lesson in the wilderness Stuart Jenkins

1337 **Medicine and the Media** Plays on the mind Stephen Wilson

1138 Medicine and Books

1138 J T Hughes: *The Laboratory Revolution in Medicine* (Ed A Cunningham, P Williams)

1138 D J Weatherall: *Gene Mapping: Using Law and Ethics as Guides* (G J Annas, S Elias)

1139 Best books on cardiology: a personal choice Nick Boon

1140 **Minerva**

Contradictory studies and insider dealing

Little could be better for the education of medical students and doctors than to present them with two studies that reach directly contrary conclusions. They can then see the danger of drawing conclusions from one study—even when that study seems to be well done. This week's journal contains a good example of such studies.

Grethe Støa-Birketvedt from Norway has found in a double blind randomised study that cimetidine suspension produces significantly greater weight loss than placebo (p 1091). And in an equally well designed study a group from Copenhagen has found that it doesn't (p 1093). John Garrow in an editorial can spot no obvious fault but is sceptical about the claims for cimetidine (p 1084). Journal clubs across the globe will be applying themselves to trying to understand why the studies should produce such different results, but in the end another trial will surely be necessary.

Had the *BMJ* published the paper with the positive results for cimetidine on its own then the effect on the share price of the manufacturers of H₂ antagonists might have been dramatic—because a drug that acted so powerfully on such a common problem as weight loss might find a huge market. Those who knew about the study before publication might have bought shares in such companies and then sold them for a handsome

profit after publication. If they had done so, they would have been guilty of insider dealing—as a paper on p 1112 describes. The authors discuss the complex issues surrounding such cases and conclude that the results of potentially price sensitive clinical studies should be published in peer reviewed journals without prior disclosure. The possible effect that prior disclosure of trials may have is illustrated by the graph in the margin. It shows what happened to the price of Wellcome shares around the time of the publication in the *Lancet* of the preliminary results of the Concorde trial showing that zidovudine did not delay death or the onset of AIDS in asymptomatic patients with HIV. (The effect is complicated by the share price of most pharmaceutical companies falling after the Clintons announced their intention of reducing expenditure on drugs in the United States.)

Some relief may be needed after tackling these papers, and such material is provided by an editorial on rediscovering the importance of gardens in healing (p 1080) and by Stuart Handysides describing how careful design can make life better for people with dementia (p 1115). A professor of medicine told me in 1978 that in 20 years' time doctors would be working more with architects than stethoscopes. Maybe he was right.

BMJ

Editor's
Choice

