

# BMJ



BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL NO 6894 VOLUME 306

INTERNATIONAL

**Editorials**

1703 The future of health care in the United Kingdom  
Allyson M Pollock

1704 Sex selection  
T M Marteau

1765 Biochemical screening for Down's syndrome  
Michael Connor

1706 Trials and errors  
Paul Knipschild

1707 How can doctors diagnose colorectal cancer earlier?  
Ian MacLennan, James Hill

1708 London specialty reviews  
Jane Smith

**News**

1709-1714 London's specialist centres halved · Whistle blowers · Doctors' health and suicide · NHS complaints · US defines mental illness · High Court raps health authorities · Ontario doctors' trouble · Complementary medicine controls · GPs and fundholding · Ripping off the NHS · Mrs Clinton's olive branch

**Papers**

1715 Functional abilities at age 4 years of children born before 29 weeks of gestation  
Ann Johnson, Pat Townshend, Patricia Yudkin, Diana Bull, Andrew R Wilkinson

1718 Can paternal preconceptual radiation account for the increase of leukaemia and non-Hodgkin's lymphoma in Seascale?  
L J Kinlen

1722 Is screening and intervention for microalbuminuria worthwhile in patients with insulin dependent diabetes?  
K Borch-Johnsen, H Wenzel, G C Viberti, C E Mogensen

1726 Site of principal metabolic defect in idiopathic haemochromatosis: insights from transplantation of an affected organ  
Paul L Dabkowski, Peter W Angus, Richard A Smallwood, John Ireton, Robert M Jones

1726 Increased concentrations of serum lipoprotein (a) in response to growth hormone treatment  
Hans Olivecrona, Sverker Ericsson, Lars Berglund, Bo Angelin

**General Practice**

1728 Do clinical guidelines improve general practice management and referral of infertile couples?  
Carolyn Emslie, Jeremy Grimshaw, Allan Templeton

1731 Explaining variations in prescribing costs across England  
Tony Morton-Jones, Mike Pringle

**Education & Debate**

1735 Contraceptives, counselling, and pregnancy in women with sickle cell disease  
Richard J Howard, Catherine Lillis, Susan M Tuck

1737 Why have child pedestrian death rates fallen?  
Ian Roberts

1740 How to leave practice  
David Snadden

1742 Lesson of the Week: The first 15 cm are important in upper gastrointestinal endoscopy  
A S Rai, H Steer

1743 ABC of One to Seven: Febrile convulsions  
H B Valman

1739 Correction:  
How can we best prolong life? Benefits of coronary risk factor reduction in non-diabetic and diabetic subjects Yudkin

1746-1768 Obituary · Letters · Medicopolitical Digest · Soundings · Personal View · Medicine and the Media · Medicine and Books · Minerva · (in detail overleaf)

# CONTENTS *pages 1746-1768*

## 1746 Obituary

G L Montgomery, J Hirst, E A Wood, S L Wright, I L Chesham, S M Sangster, D J Anderson, T M Andrews, R S Carpenter

## 1748 Letters

1748	Dispensing in general practice T McCormack; D Roberts; P Thomas; G Emrys-Jones; J D Collinge; D Smith; M Pringle and T Morton-Jones	1753	Chickenpox in pregnancy T Stephenson 1753 Updating FHSA registers L Roe and others 1754 Do we need more hospices? C F B Regnard 1754 Infection control in dentistry C Scully and others
1749	Teenage pregnancy M Simms; L Jacobsen and others	1754 Department without daylight S M Hewitt 1754 Coroners' role in children's deaths T Solomon	
1750	Open access gastroscopy P A Cann and others; A Zermansky; P N Malcolm and others	1755 The new NHS P Mott; J Gaffin; S Ramaiah 1755 Guidance for negotiating consultants' contracts J Chawner	
1751	Accident and emergency in London C W I Owens and others; N Murphy; D J Harborne and J Worrell	1755 Specialist training L Mascarenhas; P C May; J Grant; C D Collins; B Thalayasingam; S Brearley; A J Crisp	
1752	Treating hyperhidrosis A Gordon and J Collin; A C Quinn and others	1757 Medical Research Council defends peer review D A Rees	
1752	Child health surveillance J Gregg and others	1757 Correction Screening for ovarian cancer: other chronic diseases affect serum marker (Tambyah and others)	
1753	Antenatal HIV testing may put pressure on women H Massiah		
1753	Reduction in infant mortality probably due to fall in cot deaths R R Gordon		

## 1758 Medicopolitical Digest

From the LMC conference · From the junior staffs conference · Implementing the Calman report · Intimidation of junior staff

## 1763 Soundings Confidentiality Duncan Curr; Thatcherism: the health audit Bernard Dixon

## 1764 Personal view Counselling or cancelled? Robert Jones; They do it to get a council flat Anonymous

## 1765 Medicine and the Media Terrible transatlantic telemedicine Carl Elliott

## 1766 Medicine and Books

1766 Angela Coulter: *Social Support and Motherhood* (Ann Oakley)  
1766 Peter Jones: *Infections in Immunocompromised Infants and Children* (Ed Christian C Patrick)  
1767 Best books on tropical medicine: a personal choice C J Ellis

## 1768 Minerva

*Instructions to authors appeared in the issue of 2 January 1993, p 55*

# BMJ

© British Medical Journal 1993.  
All Rights Reserved. No part of this  
publication may be reproduced,  
stored in a retrieval system, or  
transmitted in any form or by any  
other means, electronic,  
mechanical, photocopying,  
recording, or otherwise, without  
prior permission, in writing, of the  
British Medical Journal.

US second class postage paid at  
Rahway, NJ. Postmaster: send  
address changes to: BMJ, c/o  
Mercury Airfreight International  
Ltd Inc, 2323 Randolph Avenue,  
Avenel, NJ 07001, USA.  
US (direct) subscription \$250.00.

Published by the proprietors,  
the British Medical Association,  
Tavistock Square, London WC1H  
9JR. Printed by BPCC Magazines  
(Milton Keynes) Ltd, Milton Keynes.  
Typesetting by Bedford Typesetters  
Ltd, Bedford. Registered as a  
newspaper.

## Gloom over the NHS

As BMA representatives gather at Torquay this weekend for their annual meeting—among other things, to defend the NHS—Allyson Pollock gives them a worrying picture of how the health service might go (p 1703). Her analysis of current thinking among health service managers augurs badly for the core values of the NHS—equity, equality, and comprehensiveness. Just how deeply ingrained those core values are in British medical thinking is illustrated by this week's comments by Hart, from America (p 1714). It is hard to imagine the BMA resisting government proposals for health care reform on the grounds that they violate property rights. But that is the line the American Medical Association is taking against President Clinton's likely proposals for global health care budgets and price controls.

British doctors have long been familiar with tight budgets, and Londoners for longer than many. The recommendations of the reviews of tertiary services in London (p 1709) will profoundly affect many working in London. But, as Jane Smith points out in her editorial (p 1708), the model of hubs and spokes and of

integration that underlies the reviews' recommendations may in time affect clinical practice well beyond London and these six specialties.

Whether general practitioners should have access to "specialist" procedures like gastroscopy is the subject of a vigorous correspondence, with Arnold Zermansky arguing that general practitioners are more discriminating in their use of investigations than hospital doctors (p 1750). Meanwhile the arguments about whether dispensing doctors are costly prescribers continues; Mike Pringle and Tony Morton-Jones, authors of a study suggesting that dispensing doctors were high cost prescribers, concede that product liability (but not value added tax) complicates the picture (p 1749).

The *BMJ* devotes more space to how to cope with infertility (with some evidence of the effectiveness of guidelines in this week's issue, p 1728) than to how to avoid an unwanted baby. Our anonymous personal view writer argues (p 1764) that the NHS shows the same bias; if the staff of family planning clinics treated clients like midwives treat expectant mothers the teenage pregnancy rates might fall, she suggests.