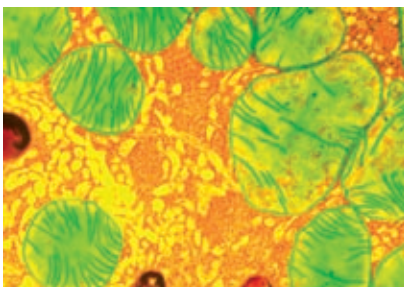




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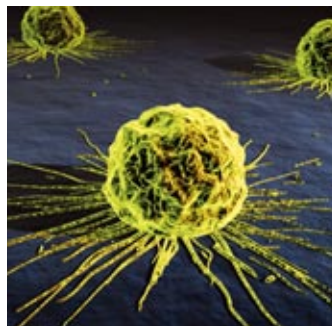




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Clinical review: cervical cancer, p 765



An unusual case of jaundice, p 773

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- 755 Dietary antioxidants and primary prevention of age related macular degeneration: systematic review and meta-analysis**
Prospective cohort studies including nearly 150 000 people, with 1878 incident cases of early age related macular degeneration, do not support primary prevention using antioxidants
Elaine W-T Chong, Tien Y Wong, Andreas J Kreis, Julie A Simpson, Robyn H Guymer
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- 759 Comparison of hospital episode statistics and central cardiac audit database in public reporting of congenital heart surgery mortality**
For reporting mortality within 30 days of open heart surgery in infants in the UK the central cardiac audit database is the more accurate and complete source
Stephen Westaby, Nicholas Archer, Nicola Manning, Satish Adwani, Catherine Grebenik, Oliver Ormerod, Ravi Pillai, Neil Wilson
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- 762 Preventing childhood obesity: two year follow-up results from the Christchurch obesity prevention programme in schools (CHOPPS)**
Two years after children aged 7-11 in the intervention arm of a cluster randomised trial reduced their consumption of carbonated drinks and kept their weight down, the benefits have not been sustained
Janet James, Peter Thomas, David Kerr

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- 769 Pregnancy plus: Epilepsy in pregnancy**
This article explores the therapeutic problems that arise when a patient with epilepsy on treatment becomes pregnant and needs both effective seizure control and attention to the safety of her fetus
Torbjörn Tomson, Vilho Hiilesmaa
- 773 Lesson of the week: An unusual cause of jaundice**
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Effectiveness of paramedic practitioners in attending 999 calls from elderly people in the community: cluster randomised controlled trial
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YOSHIKAZU TSUNO/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

PICTURE OF THE WEEK

A prototype model for a “power glove” is demonstrated at the Home Care and Rehabilitation Exhibition in Tokyo. The robotic glove is designed to help patients recover from partial paralysis during rehabilitation. Its artificial muscles are powered by compressed air for each of the fingers. Sensors are attached to the healthy arm, which controls the muscles simultaneously on the paralysed side

THE WEEK IN NUMBERS

<1 Life saved in the next 10 years by breast screening 1000 women in their 40s in the US (Editorial p 731)

1 million Number of selling points for alcohol in Brazil, where the population is 180 million (Letters p 735)

21% Percentage of consultants doing more than three duties at the same time while on call (News p 738)

60% Percentage of 1736 pregnant women with epilepsy who remained seizure free throughout pregnancy (Practice p 769)

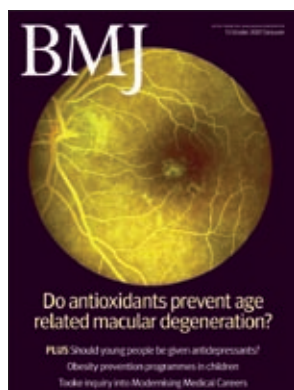
THE WEEK IN QUOTES

“The Pentagon did not respond to inquiries from the BMJ about possible future plans for its “make love not war” initiative” (News p 741)

“Funding for fertility treatment in the UK is in a state of turmoil with the eligibility rules for receiving support varying widely” (Analysis p 752)

“... in primary prevention of AMD ... antioxidants have little or no effect” (Research p 755)

“Cervical cancer is the second most common cancer in women worldwide, with more than half a million new cases diagnosed in 2005” (Clinical Review p 765)



ON THE COVER

Do antioxidants prevent age related macular degeneration?

Editorial, p 729

Research, p 773

Cover shows fluorescein angiography of macular area of retina

COVER IMAGE: PAUL PARKER/MEDISCAN

PLUS

In this week's BMJ careers

Will MMC deny doctors valuable intensive care experience?

GMC's new registration framework

The foundations of a good application

Interview with an NHS surgeon who has served in Iraq and Afghanistan

POSTAL STRIKES

Deliveries of this week's journal are likely to have been affected by postal strikes. As these are likely to recur, readers should expect further disruption to the supply of their journals

Articles appearing in this print journal are likely to have been shortened.

To see the full version of articles go to bmj.com.

bmj.com also contains material that is supplementary to articles: this will be indicated in the text of the article (references will be given as w1, w2, etc) and be labelled as extra on bmj.com.

EDITOR'S CHOICE

The way of the world

This week I clicked the Send button without realising that my email was being shared with the person I was writing about. I was warning colleagues that I'd banned a persistent respondent "from raving on about" his pet theory using rapid responses and didn't want him opening up another front using feedback to Richard Lehman's blog.

While the respondent ponders whether my "less than polite" response deserves wider exposure, I'm pondering whether I should have "sender's remorse" for describing his behaviour in the terms I did. After all, this followed 17 rapid responses (his count) on the same topic from him and three emails from me, asking him to stop.

Thoughts about appropriate tone were running through my head when I read David Colquhoun's criticisms of our associate editor (and former US editor), Doug Kamerow, for being "excessively tolerant" of the advance of complementary and alternative medicine (Letters p 736). Colquhoun is the sort of man who, if asked what he thought about the closure of homeopathic hospitals, would answer: "A start."

Colquhoun prefers straight talking Americans, like Gerald Weissmann and Wallace Sampson. In his article, "Homeopathy: Holmes, Hogwarts, and the Prince of Wales," Weissmann wrote, "If the trend persists perhaps MIT or Cal Tech will march in step with the medical schools and offer prizes for integrative alchemy or alternative engineering." Calling for the defunding of the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine, Sampson wrote, "After ten years of existence and over \$200 million in expenditures, it has not proved effectiveness for any 'alternative' method."

Just last week, one of our sister journals, *Postgraduate Medical Journal*, published another negative study. Its systematic review of all available studies of individualised herbal medicine found no convincing evidence of benefit (News p 743). So, how polite do we need to be about an alternative world view that isn't coming up with the goods?

Good manners in the 21st century apparently means suspending judgment, according each viewpoint equal respect. But it's "a dangerous error to conclude . . . that all imaginable views are equally deserving," cautions Martin Rees, president of the Royal Society, about politicians' use of science. They, and by extension the rest of us, shouldn't choose "which, if any, scientific view to adopt and which to discard, much as they might choose one bunch of flowers over another." Science "is about how the world is, not about what suits our prejudices" (*Financial Times* 1 October 2007).

Telling it how it is is the aim of this journal, even if sometimes we need two goes to get it right—witness the copious Corrections and Clarifications we publish each week (p 754). Some people are justifiably cross about these errors, but many more want to communicate to us that the journal has upset them in some way that has nothing to do with factual inaccuracies. It's as if by knowing their sensitivities we can avoid giving offence next time. We've almost arrived at the point where respecting people's feelings is more important than telling the truth.

So the last word should go to Theodore Dalrymple and to the lesson that King Lear's fatal misjudgment of his daughters holds for us (p 777). "For is it not the case that we live in an age of emotional incontinence," he asks, "when they who emote the most are believed to feel the most?" The costs may be surprisingly high: by the end of Shakespeare's play, Lear and his three daughters are dead.

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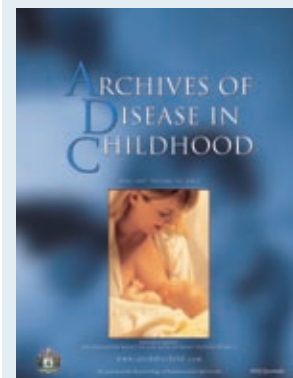
WHAT'S NEW AT THE BMJ GROUP

BMJ Masterclass for GPs; Cardiology & Diabetes

Learn the latest in complications of diabetes from Dr Tim Butler, GP Specialist in Diabetes masterclasses.bmj.com/GPs/cardiology-diabetes

Obesity in children

For a recent systematic review see the child health section of *BMJ Clinical Evidence* clinicalevidence.bmj.com

**Archives of Disease in Childhood**

A key international journal focusing on all aspects of child health and disease from the perinatal period (in the *Fetal & Neonatal* edition) through to adolescence.

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