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- 916 Improving the quality of care with performance indicators**  
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## RESEARCH

### 919 Effectiveness of paramedic practitioners in attending 999 calls from elderly people in the community: cluster randomised controlled trial

People aged 83, on average, with acute minor conditions attended to by paramedics were less likely than controls to attend the emergency department, more satisfied, and had equivalent mortality

Suzanne Mason, Emma Knowles, Brigitte Colwell, Simon Dixon, Jim Wardrope, Robert Gorringe, Helen Snooks, Julie Perrin, Jon Nicholl

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### 922 Occupational therapy for patients with problems in personal activities of daily living after stroke: systematic review of randomised trials

For every 100 people with stroke who received occupational therapy focused on personal activities of daily living, 11 would be spared dependency on others, deterioration, or death during the next 3-12 months

Lynn Legg, Avril Drummond, Jo Leonardi-Bee, J R F Gladman, Susan Corr, Mireille Donkervoort, Judi Edmans, Louise Gilbertson, Lyn Jongbloed, Pip Logan, Catherine Sackley, Marion Walker, Peter Langhorne

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### 925 Combined resynchronisation and implantable defibrillator therapy in left ventricular dysfunction: Bayesian network meta-analysis of randomised controlled trials

Combined therapy reduced all cause mortality by a third compared with medical treatment alone, but did not further improve survival when compared with defibrillation or resynchronisation used separately

Simon KH Lam, Andrew Owen

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## CLINICAL REVIEW

### 929 Management of sepsis

Iain Mackenzie, Andrew Lever

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### 933 Pregnancy plus: Systemic lupus erythematosus

Systemic lupus erythematosus in pregnancy brings risks for the mother, and possible harm to the fetus if the disease is treated. This article discusses the challenges of management

Lucy H Mackillop, Sarah J Germain, Catherine Nelson-Piercy

### 936 Lesson of the week: Anal ulceration induced by nicorandil

In patients with anal fissures or anal ulceration, treatment with the drug nicorandil should be considered as a possible cause

Fayyaz Akbar, Andrew Maw, Arnab Bhowmick

## RESEARCH PUBLISHED AHEAD OF PRINT

### Correlations among measures of quality in HIV care in the United States: cross sectional study

Ira B Wilson, Bruce E Landon, Peter V Marsden, Lisa R Hirschhorn, Keith McInnes, Lin Ding, Paul D Cleary

### Long term risk of invasive cancer after treatment for cervical intraepithelial neoplasia grade 3: population based cohort study

Björn Strander, Agneta Andersson-Ellström, Ian Milsom, Pär Sparén

### Protective effect of antibiotics against serious complications of common respiratory tract infections: retrospective cohort study with the UK General Practice Research Database

I Petersen, A M Johnson, A Islam, G Duckworth, D M Livermore, A C Hayward

### Plant based insect repellent and insecticide treated bed nets to protect against malaria in areas of early evening biting vectors: double blind randomised placebo controlled clinical trial in the Bolivian Amazon

N Hill, A Lenglet, A M Arnéz, I Carneiro

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## PICTURE OF THE WEEK

A woman suspected of having leptospirosis receives medical attention from a doctor of the Nicaraguan army in a field hospital in Malpaisillo, 130 km northwest of Managua. Nine people have died and 1500 have been infected by leptospire bacteria, which are spread by animals' urine. Authorities said that the outbreak was probably caused by recent floods.

## THE WEEK IN NUMBERS

**£24 250** Investment needed to train paramedic practitioners to deal with minor emergencies in the community (Editorial p 893)

**24 hours** Time in which a new health watch dog could close an English hospital to fight infections (News p 904)

**11** Number of people in every 100 with stroke who received occupational therapy focused on personal activities who would be spared dependency on others, deterioration, or death in the next 3-12 months (Research p 922)

**30-40%** Percentage of women with systemic lupus erythematosus who have antiphospholipid antibodies (Pregnancy Plus p 933)

## THE WEEK IN QUOTES

“Even the most entrenched observer can see that mud slinging, muck raking, intimidation, and professional isolation is no way to conduct a scientific inquiry” (Feature p 910)

“Selling new technology to the NHS is like stuffing a goose with corn, except that it's unlikely to produce foie gras.” (Body Politic p 913)

“Lack of evidence of heterogeneity is not evidence of homogeneity.” (Analysis p 914)

“First and foremost among specific treatments [for sepsis] are prompt appropriate empirical antimicrobials” (Clinical Review p 929)



## ON THE COVER

Paramedics and minor emergencies

**Editorials, p 893**  
**Research pp 919**

COVER IMAGE: IMAGE SOURCE/REX

## PLUS

## In this week's BMJ careers

Fifteen minute interview with John Tooke

Is there a doctor in the house?

We need to reappraise appraisals

Review: Developing the Wise

Doctor

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## EDITOR'S CHOICE

## Going to extremes

A lot can go wrong between conception and that last, failed attempt at cardiopulmonary massage, but it's the two extremes of life that seem most fraught. To my knowledge, no cardinals or archbishops have opined on Lyme disease (p 910) or sepsis (p 929), but they've had a lot to say on abortion and end of life decisions.

Never out of the news and courts in the United States (p 903), abortion is firmly back on the political agenda in the United Kingdom. As Jonathan Gornall pointed out earlier this year, the core aim of anti-abortionists is the complete abolition of abortion, except where it's a matter of life or death for the mother (*BMJ* 2007;334:285). Given the impossibility of repealing abortion laws in developed countries, their focus has moved to chip-chipping away at the upper legal time limit for abortions. In the UK, they've proposed bringing it down from 24 to 20 weeks. Last year, that would have meant 2500 fewer fetuses being aborted in England and Wales, or 1.2% of the total. The British Medical Association, the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, and the Royal College of Nursing all maintain that the upper limit should remain at 24 weeks. So does the UK government (p 903).

For the conceptus, surviving to birth isn't the end of the struggle: the Modern Parent is lying in wait. Des Spence looks back to a golden age when "having children involved two teenagers falling in love, having sex, then being forced to marry at the age of 20... The children tumbled out, and parents just muddled through." (Cue something by Dolly Parton.) Now we have "stagnant pools of poisonous introspection in which we are all drowning, cold dark pools fed by television programmes, magazines, and so many expert books." Spence's prescription: "tell parents to throw all the parenting theories into life's wheelie bin, to raise their heads and trust intuition, and even enjoy being parents again" (p 940).

From the good enough parent to the good enough death: must attempted cardiopulmonary resuscitation always be part of it? Not if the patient doesn't want it, says the BMA, Royal College of Nursing, and the Resuscitation Council in updated guidelines (p 901). Nor if the most senior clinician in charge of the patient's care, after due consultation, can't see the point. Sanity breaks out.

Resuscitation is presumably the last thing on the minds of healthcare professionals ministering on death row in Texas. There, condemned prisoners are invited to make a last statement which, along with their photograph and convictions, is published on the website of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice. Brendan Kelly and Sharon Foley examined the central themes and psychological constructs of the last statements made by 100 prisoners. It is interesting enough that these statements should read like suicide notes—but then the authors turn the spotlight on themselves: why were they, Irish psychiatrists, doing the study? To what extent should they permit their views about capital punishment to shape the writing of their paper? In their personal view (p 938) they say the things about "state sponsored killing" they censored from their research paper.

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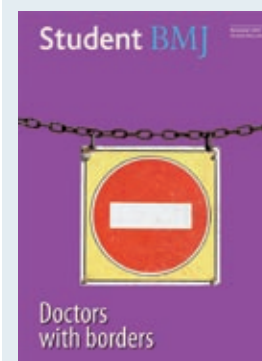
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