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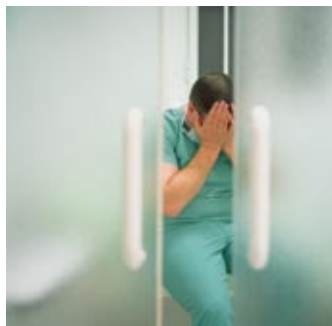
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Doctors and substance dependence, pp 1154, 1156



Statin induced myopathy, p 1159



Aspirin in type 2 diabetes, p 1163

RESEARCH

1146 Counselling for burnout in Norwegian doctors: one year cohort study

Doctors who took part in brief counselling reported a reduction in burnout and job stress after a year, and half had sought more formal psychotherapy

Karin E Isaksson Rø, Tore Gude, Reidar Tyssen, Olaf G Aasland

» Editorial p 1121; Research, pp 1150, 1154, 1156

1150 Alcohol consumption and alcohol counselling behaviour among US medical students: cohort study

Of the class of 2003 at 16 medical schools—surveyed at freshman orientation, entrance to wards, and senior year—a third reported excessive drinking throughout, and only half of senior students felt highly confident about their ability to discuss alcohol with their patients

Erica Frank, Lisa Elon, Timothy Naimi, Robert Brewer

» Editorial p 1121; Research, pp 1146, 1154, 1156

1154 Five year outcomes in a cohort study of physicians treated for substance use disorders in the United States

More than two thirds of doctors completed treatment and resumed practice under supervision and monitoring, and at five years nearly 80% of them were licensed and working

A Thomas McLellan, Gregory S Skipper, Michael Campbell, Robert L DuPont

» Editorial p 1121; Research, pp 1146, 1150, 1156

1156 Characteristics and outcomes of doctors in a substance dependence monitoring programme in Canada: prospective descriptive study

After abstinence based residential treatment 85% of the doctors successfully completed a five year programme of monitoring, most of them without relapsing

Joan M Brewster, I Michael Kaufmann, Sarah Hutchison, Cynthia MacWilliam

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CLINICAL REVIEW

1159 Statin induced myopathy

Sivakumar Sathasivam, Bryan Lecky

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1163 Evidence based case report: Aspirin in type 2 diabetes: is there any evidence base?

Aspirin is routinely given to patients with type 2 diabetes to prevent cardiovascular events, but does this practice have any evidence base?

Maie Walsh, Geoffrey Spurling

1165 Rational imaging: Investigating the hoarse voice

This article explores the radiological approaches available to investigate the causes of a hoarse voice

Pieter M Pretorius, Chris A Milford

1168 Lesson of the week: Advanced glaucomatous visual loss and oral steroids

Blindness induced by glaucoma is a serious but preventable side effect of long term, high dose steroids

Vikas Chadha, Iain Cruickshank, Robert Swingler, Roshini Sanders

RESEARCH PUBLISHED ONLINE

Impact of micronutrient supplementation during pregnancy on birth weight, duration of gestation, and perinatal mortality in rural western China: double blind cluster randomised controlled trial

BMJ, doi:10.1136/bmj.a2001

Lingxia Zeng, Yue Cheng, Shaonong Dang, Hong Yan, Michael J Dibley, Suying Chang, Lingzhi Kong

Early head injury and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder: retrospective cohort study

BMJ, doi:10.1136/bmj.a1984

Heather T Keenan, Gillian C Hall, Stephen W Marshall

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NHS EMPLOYERS



PICTURE OF THE WEEK

Luke Campion, environment manager at the Royal United Hospital Bath NHS Trust. His photo is one of 60 photographs and stories in *Extraordinary*, a book published as part of the NHS Employers' 60th anniversary campaign to show what makes staff proud of the NHS. The 60 people were chosen from the 500 000 who filled in postcards during the campaign. Luke's passions are recycling and the restoration of the NHS 60 garden.

THE WEEK IN NUMBERS

4000 Minimum number of UK patients who are estimated to require donor sperm each year (Editorials, p 1124)

1.5 million Number of people a year who will experience a muscle related adverse event when taking a statin (Clinical Review, p 1159)

10-12% Proportion of US physicians who become addicted to alcohol and other drugs (Research, p 1154)

£500m-£1bn Amount industry says it takes to fund research and develop a new drug (Feature, p 1138)

45% Proportion of victims of crime who describe their assailant as under the influence of alcohol (News, p 1131)

THE WEEK IN QUOTES

"One year after a counselling intervention initially stressed doctors reported a reduction in emotional exhaustion" (Research, p 1148)

"We can't always accept a practice as being evidence based even if it is . . . endorsed by well renowned guidelines" (Practice, p 1163)

"For one ninth of the money we put into saving the banks, every urban resident in the world could have clean running water" (News, p 1134)

"Many heads of government do not tell the public the truth about their illnesses" (Personal View, p 1173)

"Why do people find it so difficult to accept that some people may wish to end their suffering?" (Letters, p 1127)

EDITOR'S CHOICE

Doctors' health matters



Editorial, p 1121
Research, pp 1146, 1150,
1154, 1156

When Kjell Magne Bondevik became severely depressed he discussed the problem with his colleagues, told everyone the diagnosis, announced that he was taking time off for treatment, and after a month made a full return to work. This story might not seem remarkable except for the fact that he was then the prime minister of Norway. In this week's *BMJ*, David Owen, a former doctor and leader of one of the UK's political parties, says that Bondevik's frankness earned him the respect of Norwegians and helped fight the stigma of mental illness (p 1173). Owen calls for similar openness about ill health from today's national leaders, for their own sakes and because their electorates have a right to know.

Although doctors are not under the same obligations of public accountability, they are responsible for lives and for the good standing of their profession. As a group doctors have more than their fair share of stress related health issues, with higher than average rates of suicide and drug and alcohol misuse reported in some countries. Michael Peters is the medical director of the BMA's Doctors for Doctors unit, which provides confidential peer support for doctors. Interviewed in this week's Career Focus (<http://careers.bmj.com/careers/advice/view-article.html?id=3125>) and in a *BMJ* podcast (<http://podcasts.bmj.com/bmj/>), he says that "doctors are very reluctant to seek help for problems" and exist in "a culture of denial" with regard to their own health.

Thankfully, as Joan Brewster writes in an editorial (p 1121), society's response to doctors in difficulty has moved from the disciplinary to the therapeutic. But evidence is limited as to which approaches work best. Three studies in this week's journal attempt to

fill this gap, and all provide grounds for optimism: where such doctors are identified and undergo treatment, outcomes seem to be good.

Karin Isaksson Rø and colleagues followed up 185 doctors referred to a counselling centre in Norway (p 1146). Most were experiencing emotional exhaustion or "burnout", a problem also discussed by Kathy Oxtoby in Career Focus (<http://careers.bmj.com/careers/advice/view-article.html?id=3124>). A year after receiving a short counselling course, the doctors reported lower levels of burnout, along with a small reduction in working hours. The authors make no unjustified claims for the programme in view of the study design, but they point out that the character traits that make some doctors vulnerable to depression are exactly those that bring a capacity for empathy. "Support related to these personality dimensions would thus help doctors towards sound mental health in combination with good performance and empathic ability," they say.

The two other studies followed up doctors enrolled in physician support programmes in the USA (p 1154) and Canada (p 1156). All had drug and alcohol problems. Most completed the programmes and had favourable outcomes.

Such approaches both reduce the suffering of ill doctors and protect the public. Next week in London an international conference will explore evidence, attitudes, and approaches to doctors' health. Michael Peters hopes it will put doctors' health issues "squarely on the map."

Fiona Godlee, editor, *BMJ* fgodlee@bmj.com

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WHAT'S NEW AT THE BMJ GROUP

Thorax

Read the Editor's choice article FREE "Effects of maternal asthma—gestational exposure to asthma medications" thorax.bmj.com

Drug and Therapeutics Bulletin (DTB)—November issue

Reviews on glucosamine for knee osteoarthritis and ivabradine for stable angina dtb.bmj.com

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www.diabetesdiploma.com

Alcohol misuse systematic review from *BMJ Clinical Evidence*

See the website for a review of interventions for alcohol misuse in the primary care and emergency settings clinicalevidence.bmj.com

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PLUS

Career Focus, jobs, and courses appear after p 1176.

WHAT'S NEW ON BMJ.COM

LATEST RESEARCH

Efficacy of statins in familial hypercholesterolaemia

In this long term cohort study, lower statin doses than those currently advised reduced the risk of coronary heart disease to a greater extent than anticipated in patients with familial hypercholesterolaemia.



Early head injury and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder

This retrospective cohort study explores the hypothesis that medically attended head injury in young children may be causal in the later development of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. An accompanying editorial says that monitoring children with early injuries could reduce later risk.

To read these and other recent research papers, go to bmj.com/channels/research.dtl

LATEST BLOGS

Barack Obama's victory in the US presidential elections has prompted two bloggers to reflect on what this may mean for the United States in particular and the world in general. In Australia, Anna Donald finds herself overwhelmed by Obama's victory, having spent part of her formative years in the US, where she witnessed racial segregation but also the civil rights movement and the end of the Vietnam war: "I know Barak Obama is many things other than black, which is why he's won the election. But what a massive symbolic release for a country so mired in seemingly intractable racial tension. If people like me: foreigners; mere look-ons, are so affected, I can't imagine the feelings tonight across the country for people who've had to endure the heartbreak of the whole sorry history for their whole lives, whatever their colour or persuasion." In Nepal, junior doctor Matiram Pun wonders why people are so extraordinarily interested in this particular winning candidate and what his policies may mean for healthcare systems worldwide: "The developed world is flexible about the migration of health professionals from the developing world into their countries. They welcome qualified staff in whom they have not had to make any investment. But will flexibility about healthcare workers' migration be one of Obama's policies? We will have to wait and see."



To find out more about these and other blogs, visit <http://blogs.bmj.com/bmj/>

LATEST PODCAST

An international conference in London next week (<http://www.bma.org.uk/doctorshealthmatters>) focuses on the balance between doctors' life and work and the impact this has on their health. Several articles in the BMJ this week look at doctors' health and their medical practice in the United States, Canada, and Norway. In a podcast, we examine these issues, including a doctor's personal experience of alcohol dependency. Please share your views and experiences with us via rapid responses.

Last week's poll asks:

Should influenza

immunisation be mandatory for healthcare workers?

You replied:

YES 493 votes (62%)

NO 302 votes (38%)

This week's poll asks:

"Should world leaders be obliged to make their health records public?"

Let us know where you stand on this issue at www.bmj.com/#poll



MOST COMMENTED ON

Prescribing "placebo treatments": results of national survey of US internists and rheumatologists

Regulation—the real threat to clinical research

Maternal caffeine intake during pregnancy and risk of fetal growth restriction: a large prospective observational study

Prevention and treatment of surgical site infection: summary of NICE guidance

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