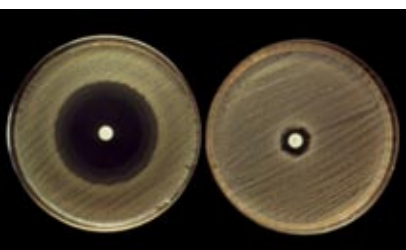




Tainted infant formula, p 711



US presidential candidates on health, p 723



Antibiotic resistance, p 726



What should doctors wear? p 762

EDITORIALS

701 Antipyretic treatment for feverish young children in primary care

No persuasive evidence shows benefit of combining paracetamol and ibuprofen, says Anthony Harnden

» *Research*, pp 729, 734

702 Medical law and protection of children

Better guidance is needed on how doctors working in child protection should manage their conflicting professional duties, say David M Foreman and Juliet Williams

703 Community treatment orders

Insufficient evidence exists to support the new legislation for England and Wales, say Krishma Jethwa and Nuwan Galappathie

704 Evidence based medicine and the medical curriculum

The search engine is now as essential as the stethoscope, say Paul Glasziou, Amanda Burls, and Ruth Gilbert

705 Translational research

From evidence based medicine to sustainable solutions for public health problems, say M E J Lean, J I Mann, J A Hoek, R M Elliot, and G Schofield

LETTERS

707 Paracetamol with ibuprofen; Tackling health inequalities

708 Injecting drug use in pregnancy; European Working Time Directive; Managing theoretical vCJD risk

709 Medical error; Pharma and medical education

710 Hypercholesterolaemia (again); National qualifying exams

NEWS

711 China's infant formula sickens nearly 13 000 English patients must consent to on screen records being viewed

712 Southall is allowed to return to protection work Catch-up MMR vaccine scheme nets a quarter of those eligible

Law might change to protect people who have computed tomography scans

713 Judge allows disclosure of nuclear workers' medical records after death

714 Italy plans to publish surgeons' success rates Urban children in Ethiopia have better survival rates than rural children

Unicef calls for more action to reduce maternal deaths and morbidity in Africa and south Asia

715 Germany debates change to law on abortions

716 Call for removal of mystique of HIV testing Doctors should be alert to new virulent strain of bacteria

717 Germany's plans to reduce use of alcohol provoke protests from industry and politicians New reported risks add to bisphenol A concerns

SHORT CUTS

718 What's new in the other general journals

FEATURES

720 America's health choices

Getting American voters to back much needed healthcare reforms will be a challenge for both contenders for the White House. Vidhya Alakeson explains what matters to them

723 Health and the US presidential campaigns

The ways Americans get insurance, the costs they bear, and their access to health care will all be affected by the plans of the presidential candidates. Barbara Markham Smith describes the implications of the two proposals

OBSERVATIONS

ONLY CONNECT

725 Valuing the well connected Nicholas A Christakis

ANALYSIS

726 Meeting the challenge of antibiotic resistance

A concerted global response is needed to tackle rising rates of antibiotic resistance, say Otto Cars and colleagues

RESEARCH, CLINICAL REVIEW, AND PRACTICE

See next page

OBITUARIES

760 Thomas Huckle Weller; Robert Charles Hedderwick Bruce; Gerald Michael Coleman; Andrew Conal Finbarr Grehan; Agnes Jane Adams Maybin; Alan Stewart Wallace; Alexander Joseph Warrington

VIEWS AND REVIEWS

PERSONAL VIEW

762 What should doctors wear?

Kiran K Turaga, Gargi Bhagavatula

MEDICAL CLASSICS

763 Tea with Walter de la Mare Martin Eastwood

763 Hero or villain? Theodore Dalrymple

COLUMNISTS

764 Ye olde guide to healthy living Wendy Moore Off the dial Des Spence

ENDGAMES

765 Case report; Prize quiz; Statistical question; Picture quiz

MINERVA

766 Childhood obesity in Chile, and other stories

ENDPIECE

759 Fear of unemployment

Bisphenol A concerns, p 717

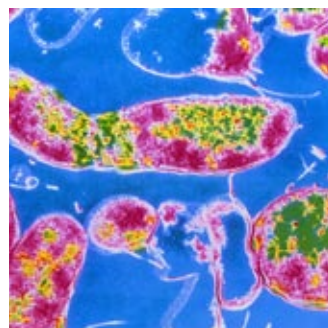




Paracetamol plus ibuprofen for treatment of fever in children, pp 729, 734



Impact of lifestyle factors on mortality in US women, p 742



Treatment of *Helicobacter pylori* infection, p 746



Diagnosis and management of ADHD in children, young people, and adults, p 751

RESEARCH

729 Paracetamol plus ibuprofen for the treatment of fever in children (PITCH): randomised controlled trial

In the first 24 hours, young children given both drugs spent 4.4 hours less time with fever than those given only paracetamol and 2.5 hours less time with fever than those given only ibuprofen

Alastair D Hay, Céire Costelloe, Niamh M Redmond, Alan A Montgomery, Margaret Fletcher, Sandra Hollinghurst, Tim J Peters

» Editorial p 701

734 Paracetamol plus ibuprofen for the treatment of fever in children (PITCH): economic evaluation of a randomised controlled trial

For children aged 6 months to 6 years in primary care the combination of both drugs performed best at no extra cost overall

Sandra Hollinghurst, Niamh Redmond, Céire Costelloe, Alan Montgomery, Margaret Fletcher, Tim J Peters, Alastair D Hay

» Editorial p 701

738 Diagnostic evaluation of people with hypertension in low income country: cohort study of "essential" method of risk stratification

In the Ecuadorian forest a feasible and affordable risk score predicted cardiovascular events and death as well as the unaffordable WHO-International Society of Hypertension guidelines

Gregorio Montalvo, Fausto Avanzini, Mariella Anselmi, Rosanna Prandi, Samuel Ibarra, Monica Marquez, Daniela Armani, Juan-Martín Moreira, Cynthia Caicedo, Maria Carla Roncaglioni, Fabio Colombo, Paola Camisasca, Valentina Milani, Simon Quimí, Felix Gonzabay, Gianni Tognoni

742 Combined impact of lifestyle factors on mortality: prospective cohort study in US women

In 24 years' follow-up of the US nurses' health study half the deaths could have been avoided by the combination of not smoking, healthy weight maintenance, keeping active, and eating well

Rob M van Dam, Tricia Li, Donna Spiegelman, Oscar H Franco, Frank B Hu

CLINICAL REVIEW

746 Treatment of *Helicobacter pylori* infection

L Fuccio, L Laterza, R M Zagari, V Cennamo, D Grilli, Franco Bazzoli

PRACTICE

751 Guidelines: Diagnosis and management of attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder in children, young people, and adults: summary of NICE guidance

This is one of a series of *BMJ* summaries of new guidelines, which are based on the best available evidence; they highlight important recommendations for clinical practice, especially where uncertainty or controversy exists

Tim Kendall, Eric Taylor, Alejandra Perez, Clare Taylor, on behalf of the Guideline Development Group

753 Commentary: Controversies in NICE guidance on attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder

Anne Thompson

754 Uncertainties page: How effective are some common treatments for traumatic brain injury?

This is a series of occasional articles that highlights areas of practice where management lacks convincing supporting evidence

Katharine Ker, Pablo Perel, Karen Blackhall, Ian Roberts

756 Lesson of the week: Fatal reactivation of hepatitis B after chemotherapy for lymphoma

Routine screening for hepatitis B in patients receiving chemotherapy or immunotherapy will save lives

Richard Dillon, Gideon M Hirschfield, Michael E D Allison, Kanchan P Rege

758 10-Minute consultation: Chronic diarrhoea in a teenager

This is part of a series of occasional articles on common problems in primary care

Sonia Saxena, Sally G Mitton, Richard Pollok

RESEARCH PUBLISHED ONLINE

Effects of improved home heating on asthma in community dwelling children: randomised controlled trial

BMJ, doi: 10.1136/bmj.a1411

Philippa Howden-Chapman, Nevil Pierse, Sarah Nicholls, Julie Gillespie-Bennett, Helen Viggers, Malcolm Cunningham, Robyn Phipps, Mikael Boulic, Pär Fjällström, Sarah Free, Ralph Chapman, Bob Lloyd, Kristin Wickens, David Shields, Michael Baker, Chris Cunningham, Alistair Woodward, Chris Bullen, Julian Crane

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WELLCOME TRUST

PICTURE OF THE WEEK

The Drawing on Life festival in London this weekend celebrates drawing, medicine, and art. In the event Totally Wired, cartoonist Steven Appleby responds to the heart beat of flautist Nathan Lee, drawing what he thinks is going on in Lee's mind and body, which is projected on the background. Lee is wired to a heart monitor while he plays. See www.thebigdraw.com.

THE WEEK IN NUMBERS

£3.5m Cost of prescriptions of paracetamol and ibuprofen in England in 2004 (Research p 734)

15% Children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder who will still have the condition in adulthood (Practice p 751)

1 in 2 Prevalence of *Helicobacter pylori* infection in the world (Clinical Review p 746)

24% Proportion of children vaccinated in an MMR catch-up campaign in London that targeted those who had previously missed out (News p 712)

50 Homicides a year committed by psychiatric patients in the community in England and Wales (Editorial p 723)

THE WEEK IN QUOTES

“Efforts to eradicate cigarette smoking and those to stimulate regular physical activity and a healthy diet should be intensified” (Research p 742)

“The opt-out consent procedure [to the summary care record] was widely seen as unworkable and unethical” (News p 711)

“All antibiotic use, appropriate or not, ‘uses up’ some of the effectiveness of that antibiotic” (Analysis p 726)

“If fashion icons such as Ralph Lauren were to dictate our attire, physicians would gladly listen” (Personal View p 762)

“General medical journals, including the BMJ, underestimate the importance of geriatric care” (Letter p 707)

EDITOR'S CHOICE

Setting limits to infinite error



Analysis, p 726

If the journal were to print an epigram over each of its sections then for Letters I'd plump for Bertolt Brecht's description of the purpose of science. "The aim of science is not to open the door to infinite wisdom, but to set a limit to infinite error," said the protagonist in his *Life of Galileo*. Setting a limit to infinite error just about sums up what Letters are for.

All *BMJ* letters begin their lives as (online) rapid responses to articles, and in a generous week we select about 10% of these to publish as letters in the print journal. Our main criterion for selection is whether a response identifies an error, weakness, or incompleteness in the original article that readers would benefit from knowing about.

This week's Letters pages provide a good example of our aspirations. Colombians Ospina and Salcedo flag up a problem of using ibuprofen in children with viral infections, which wasn't mentioned in the original research paper (p 707). Tassy and Retornaz from Marseilles and Wilson from Ottawa detect two missing elements from WHO's report on health inequities (p 707). Laura McGlone and colleagues from Glasgow (p 708) quote work indicating that methadone in pregnancy may have adverse effects on fetuses (a paper we published in June (2008;336:1303-5) was more sanguine about this).

Sometimes the Letters pages can seem very combative, with opposing factions slugging it out. But there is a less gladiatorial route to enlightenment, which uses previous *BMJ* articles as "pegs" on which to hang some interesting new information. An example is the letter from Onno Terpstra, a Dutch professor of surgery, who wades into the debate over the European Working Time Directive, brandishing data (p 708). When in 1993

the Dutch parliament approved a reduction in junior doctors' working time to 48 hours a week, "the surgical community in the Netherlands experienced all the classic stages of mourning as described by Kübler-Ross," he wrote. A few years on, trainees are operating on the same number of cases, but working fewer hours per week. Three quarters of them are happy with the new arrangements, and applicants for training outnumber the available slots by a factor of two to three.

A second example of interesting new information is Jim Rodgers's discussion of how the Medical and Dental Defence Union of Scotland has been working with Terema, an organisation run by doctors and former British Airways pilots that focuses on managing the human factors in risk (p 709). And in a third example, the Critical Psychiatry Network reports that it's possible to run an annual meeting without funding from the drug industry "albeit in less plush surroundings than usual" (p 709).

For the past few years, we've been selecting responses for publication five days after print publication of the article to which they refer. That's proved too tight a deadline for respondents with very complicated cases to assemble and for authors of criticised articles to compose their replies. For that reason we're increasing to 12 days the time elapsing between print publication of the article and letter selection. That should allow us to notch up a few more victories over infinite error.

**Tony Delamothe, deputy editor, *BMJ*,
tdelamothe@bmj.com**

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PLUS

Career Focus, jobs, and courses appear after p 764.

WHAT'S NEW ON BMJ.COM

This week, we've published our fifth *BMJ* video on bmj.com. It accompanies a recent news story and features journalist Tony Sheldon interviewing Peter Holland, the president of the Dutch Medical Association, about the association's new child abuse code. In future, we are hoping to feature a short video accompanying an article most weeks.

LATEST RESEARCH

What is the validity of the Manchester triage system in paediatric emergency care? Moderate, according to this prospective observational study. It errs on the safe side, with much more over-triage than under-triage compared with an independent reference standard for urgency. Triage of patients with a medical problem or in younger children is particularly difficult. The accompanying editorial says that the system could be improved by incorporating physiological parameters.

Find out about this and other recent research projects at bmj.com/channels/research.dtl



LATEST BLOGS



New guest blogger Tauseef Mehrli is about to start a year's stint as a GP registrar in London, fully aware that his future will require the utmost in flexibility and lateral thinking: "Central London has the dubious distinction of being the epicentre of changes to primary care provision, and I'm already eyeing up a corner of my local Tesco Express to set up shop in. I wonder how many reward points patients will accrue on agreeing to see me as they wander past the frozen veg."

Guest blogger Julian Sheather reflects on art and science: "Science can remind art that approaching the world requires a disciplined attentiveness, a deep commitment to the real in all its complexity. But art can remind science, and particularly medicine, that the human being must remain at the centre of its project, with all of that creature's needs, its fallibilities."

"We have no right to steal from future generations," says public health doctor David Pencheon, commenting on the NHS carbon reduction strategy: "Doctors, scientists, and other health professionals have a special responsibility to urge our colleagues, communities, policy makers, and politicians to take this threat seriously now by concerted action."

Join these debates and others at <http://blogs.bmj.com/bmj>

Last week's poll asked

"Is early intervention in the major psychiatric disorders justified?"

You replied:

YES 303 (85%)

NO 52 (15%)

This week's poll asks

"Should medical records remain confidential after a patient's death?"

MOST COMMENTED ON

What skills do doctors and nurses need?

Getting a patient's consent for publication

Misuse of harmful, illegal stimulant drugs grows in developing world, UN warns

Modern approaches to teaching and learning anatomy

Ethnic stereotypes and the underachievement of UK medical students from ethnic minorities: qualitative study

MOST READ

Adherence to Mediterranean diet and health status: meta-analysis

ECG leads to quick analysis

Combined impact of lifestyle factors on mortality: prospective cohort study in US women

Dr Nurse will see you now

Treatment of *Helicobacter pylori* infection



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