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Few would argue with Ara Darzi's vision of high quality care for all but agreeing on how to assess it is much more difficult, Nigel Hawkes reports

- 506 Are NHS superbug fears turning patients into hospital cleaners?**

A hygiene pack for those going into hospital has been selling in the thousands. But should a sick person be wiping down lockers three times a day, and is there any evidence for using the pack anyway, asks Margaret McCartney

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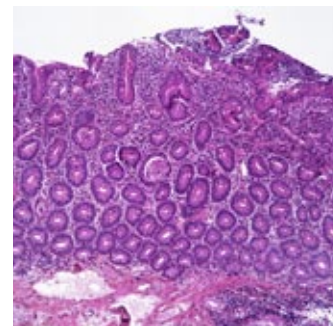
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- 515 Effectiveness of nurse delivered endoscopy: findings from randomised multi-institution nurse endoscopy trial (MINuET)**  
Nurses are more thorough and are as clinically effective as doctors at performing diagnostic endoscopy, according to the results of this multi-centre trial of upper and lower gastrointestinal endoscopy  
John Williams, Ian Russell, Dharmaraj Durai, Wai Yee Cheung, Amanda Farrin, Karen Bloor, Simon Coulton, Gerry Richardson  
» [Editorial p 487](#); [Research p 519](#)
- 519 Cost effectiveness of nurse delivered endoscopy: findings from randomised multi-institution nurse endoscopy trial (MINuET)**  
Although doctors' time is more expensive, researchers tentatively conclude that they provide the most cost effective service – 0.015 QALY more for an extra £56 per patient  
Gerry Richardson, Karen Bloor, John Williams, Ian Russell, Dharmaraj Durai, Wai Yee Cheung, Amanda Farrin, Simon Coulton  
» [Editorial p 487](#); [Research p 515](#)
- 522 Association between change in high density lipoprotein cholesterol and cardiovascular disease morbidity and mortality: systematic review and meta-regression analysis**  
This analysis of 108 randomised controlled trials reinforce doubts about trying to lower coronary risk by increasing HDL cholesterol, but confirmed the effectiveness of reducing LDL cholesterol  
Matthias Briel, Ignacio Ferreira-Gonzalez, John J You, Paul J Karanicolas, Elie A Akl, Ping Wu, Boris Blechacz, Dirk Bassler, Xinge Wei, Asheer Sharman, Irene Whitt, Suzana Alves da Silva, Zahira Khalid, Alain J Nordmann, Qi Zhou, Stephen D Walter, Noah Vale, Neera Bhatnagar, Christopher O'Regan, Edward J Mills, Heiner C Bucher, Victor M Montori, Gordon H Guyatt  
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- 526 Vulnerability and access to care for South Asian Sikh and Muslim patients with life limiting illness in Scotland: prospective longitudinal qualitative study**  
This study found that understanding of hospices was limited, and most services struggled to deliver responsive, culturally appropriate care, particularly to recent migrants, people with poor English, or no family advocate  
Allison Worth, Tasneem Irshad, Raj Bhopal, Duncan Brown, Julia Lawton, Elizabeth Grant, Scott Murray, Marilyn Kendall, James Adam, Rafik Gardee, Aziz Sheikh  
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- 531 Relation of study quality, concordance, take home message, funding, and impact in studies of influenza vaccines: systematic review**

### **pico**

While discrepancies between results and conclusions are more common in low quality studies, which tend to favour the vaccine – studies published in prestigious journals are associated with industry sponsorship, irrespective of the size or quality of the study

T Jefferson, C Di Pietrantonj, M G Debalini, A Rivetti, V Demicheli

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Control depends on strict adherence to guidelines  
Jan Kluytmans, Marc Struelens

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Anthony Harnden, Richard Lehman
- 539 Easily missed? Coeliac disease**  
Roger Jones, Sarah Sleet
- 540 A patient's journey: Coeliac disease and a gluten-free diet**  
A woman who had symptoms of coeliac disease from childhood describes how her life improved markedly once the disease was diagnosed in her 20s  
Jocelyn Anne Silvester, Mohsin Rashid
- 542 A patient's journey: Coeliac disease in childhood**  
An 11 year old boy explains how coeliac disease affects him, and his parents tell of the obstacles to the diagnosis  
Henry W M Willis, Nichola M Willis, George W Willis, Faisal R Ali, Colin Ball



BMJ

28 February 2009 Vol 338

## The Editor, BMJ

BMA House, Tavistock Square,  
London WC1H 9JR

Email: editor@bmj.com

Tel: +44 (0)20 7387 4499

Fax: +44 (0)20 7383 6418

## BMA MEMBERS' INQUIRIES

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Published weekly. US periodicals class postage paid at Rahway, NJ. Postmaster: send address changes to BMJ, c/o Mercury Airfreight International Ltd Inc, 365 Blair Road, Avenel, NJ 07001, USA. \$796. Weekly  
Printed by Precision Colour Printing Limited



ROBERT WORKMAN

## PICTURE OF THE WEEK

Actors explore some of the ethics surrounding clinical trials, in a show called *Starfish*, which is being performed at schools around London this week. The show questions the ethics of taking untried drugs and is based on a true story of a patient who died from variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease. The theatre company, Y Touring, developed the performance in consultation with an expert advisory board. The Wellcome Trust hosts a performance open to the public on 6 March.

**Corrections:** The 15 November Picture of the Week (BMJ 2008;337) showed Luke Champion (not Campion). The last item of The Week in Numbers in the 31 January issue (BMJ 2009;338) gave estimates of US (not UK) statistics in an avian flu epidemic.

## THE WEEK IN NUMBERS

**7.2%** Relative reduction in risk of death from coronary heart disease for a 10 mg/dl reduction in low density lipoprotein cholesterol (Research, p 522)

**19 000** Deaths associated with meticillin resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* in the US in 2005 (Clinical Review, p 532)

**£15** Price of "the essential hygiene pack for anyone going into hospital, travelling, or caring for a patient" (Feature, p 506)

**4** Number of ways in which you can spend money (Starting Out, p 548)

**4670** Number of people treated with NHS blood products in the 1970s and '80s infected with hepatitis C (News, p 495)

## THE WEEK IN QUOTES

**"Within ethnic minority groups the most vulnerable people, such as recent migrants, have the poorest access to services"** (Research, p 526)

**"I can't eat cup cakes anymore"**  
(A Patient's Journey, p 542)

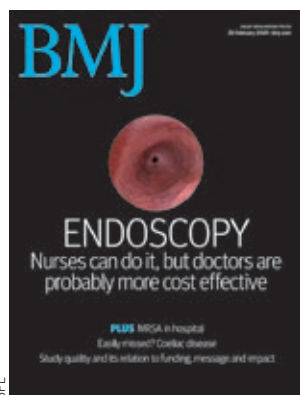
**"Lobbying for Israel seems to be in a different category from, say, lobbies against MMR vaccine"** (Analysis, p 509)

**"Joe Collier's editorial about the report *Innovating for Health* is a satirical fairytale of wonder and mystery"**  
(Letter, p 493)

**"Women who are being advised to have a mastectomy should be offered breast reconstruction"** (News, p 496)

## EDITOR'S CHOICE

## Easily missed



**Editorial, p 487**  
**Research, pp 515, 519**

Two patient journey articles this week describe the struggle to find what Jocelyn Anne Silvester calls “the most powerful tool that doctors have—a diagnosis.” She diagnosed her own coeliac disease during a biochemistry lesson after years of ill health and investigation that labelled her a “heartsink” patient (p 540). Henry Willis was nearly 4 years old when his coeliac disease was diagnosed, by which time he was severely anaemic, unwell, and undersized (p 542). Despite a family history of coeliac disease his parents struggled to convince doctors that anything was wrong. Now 11 years old and the second tallest in his class, he describes the positive effect of his diagnosis. “If you have to have a disease this is an OK one,” he writes.

Coeliac disease affects one in 100 people in Western populations but is underdiagnosed, often with serious effects on health and quality of life. Iron deficiency anaemia and a family history are important diagnostic clues, say Roger Jones and Sarah Sleet in the first of a new series of articles highlighting conditions that may be commoner than we think (p 539). Anthony Harnden and Richard Lehman suggested the series—“Easily missed?”—as a way to help doctors in primary care recognise conditions that are underdiagnosed or serious if not spotted (p 538). They have a list of possible conditions to cover and are inviting readers to suggest more.

You can test your diagnostic skills in Endgames (p 549) and with our interactive case report of a 38 year old woman with hypotensive shock at the onset of menstruation (*BMJ* 2009;338:b6, b246, [www.bmj.com/cgi/eletters/338/feb09\\_1/b6](http://www.bmj.com/cgi/eletters/338/feb09_1/b6)). Read the two previous articles and contribute to the

online discussion of the case before all is revealed on 7 March.

Also this week you’ll find our second research “pico” (p 531)—an informative print summary of a research article published in full online (doi:10.1136/bmj.b354). Tom Jefferson and colleagues are among the growing band of “piconeers” helping us to pilot this new approach to abridging research articles in print, on which we would like your feedback.

The authors’ longstanding interest has been the poor quality of research on the effectiveness of vaccines. They find that studies that favour influenza vaccine over placebo or no treatment are of significantly poorer methodological quality than those that do not, and that the overwhelmingly favourable conclusions drawn by most studies bear little relation to the actual results. The authors suggest that this discrepancy between results and conclusions explains why governments promote influenza vaccines despite the lack of evidence for their effectiveness.

They also voice doubts about the impact factor as a robust indicator of journal quality. Studies funded by industry were more likely to be published in high impact factor journals, even though these studies were no bigger or better than studies published elsewhere. Why this should be is worth exploring. One explanation not directly raised by the authors is that the sale of reprints of articles to industry is an important source of revenue for some journals, and editors may find themselves under pressure to publish certain articles regardless of their quality. If so, it’s a pressure they must resist.

**Fiona Godlee, editor, *BMJ* [fgodlee@bmj.com](mailto:fgodlee@bmj.com)**

Cite this as: *BMJ* 2009;338:b821

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Please cite all articles by year, volume, and eLocator (rather than page number), eg *BMJ* 2009;338:b145. A note on how to cite each article appears at the end of each article, and this is the form the reference will take in PubMed and other indexes.

## WHAT'S NEW AT THE BMJ GROUP

**BMJ Masterclass for GPs: Cardiology, Diabetes and CKD**

Thursday 30 April 2009—Renaissance Hotel, Manchester—Tuesday 9 June 2009—BMA House, London. Register by 16 March and save up to £30!  
[masterclasses.bmj.com/GPs](http://masterclasses.bmj.com/GPs)

**International Forum on Quality and Safety in Health Care**

17-20 March 2009, Berlin, Germany.  
 Missed the early bird registration deadline? There’s still time to register at a discounted rate if you attend as part of a group of three or more colleagues.  
[internationalforum.bmj.com](http://internationalforum.bmj.com)

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See the website for our very latest reviews, including intimate partner violence towards women.  
[clinicalevidence.bmj.com](http://clinicalevidence.bmj.com)

***Annals of the Rheumatic Diseases***

Read this FREE article, chosen by the Editor “Changes in hand and generalised bone mineral density in patients with recent-onset RA”.  
[ard.bmj.com/cgi/content/full/68/3/330](http://ard.bmj.com/cgi/content/full/68/3/330)

**PLUS**

Career Focus, jobs, and courses appear after p 548.

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## LATEST BLOGS

Amir Hannan introduced online medical records after taking over serial killer Harold Shipman's general practice in Hyde, Greater Manchester. Richard Smith blogs about the initiative after hearing Dr Hannan talk about it at a conference. What do patients think? Find out by reading responses to his blog.

How good is the NHS at sustainable purchasing, and is it committed to low carbon transport options, asks David Pencheon, head of the NHS Sustainable Development Unit in England.

And James Raftery blogs about drug rationing and the National Institute for Health and Clinical Evidence (NICE)

Find out more at <http://blogs.bmj.com/bmj/>

## LATEST RESEARCH AND EDITORIALS

A cohort study concludes that obese adolescents have the same risk of premature death in adulthood as people who smoke more than 10 cigarettes a day, while those who are overweight have the same risk as less heavy smokers.

A structured consultation programme for patients with osteoarthritis of the knee resulted in short term improvement in weight loss and time spent on physical activity, finds a randomised controlled trial.

People who have unhealthy lifestyles are more than twice as likely to have a stroke than those who eat and drink sensibly, don't smoke, and take regular exercise, according to a prospective population study of 20 040 men and women over 11 years' follow-up.

Find out more at [bmj.com/channels/research.dtl](http://bmj.com/channels/research.dtl)



## This week's poll asks:

Should men who have ever had sex with men be banned from giving blood?

## MOST READ

HDL cholesterol and cardiovascular risk

Combined effect of health behaviours and risk of first ever stroke in 20 040 men and women over 11 years' follow-up

Effect of tobacco smoking on survival of men and women by social position: a 28 year cohort study

Dementia

A 38 year old woman with hypotensive shock at the onset of menstruation

## LATEST COMMENTS

Many readers have taken issue with a BMJ news story about *Scientific Medicine*, a journal that lists the involvement of people who have never heard of the publication. One respondent says the new journal will be a "breakthrough in the dissemination of scientific awareness in the developing world." Others allege that the news story is inaccurate and discriminatory, adding: "Shame on the BMJ."

Have your say on this and other articles by clicking the Rapid Response button on [bmj.com](http://bmj.com)

## LATEST PODCAST

Gay equality group Stonewall has called on the UK National Blood Service to "lift the discriminatory blanket lifetime ban on gay men donating blood." The move came shortly before a public inquiry condemned the failings that led to thousands of people being infected with HIV and hepatitis C from contaminated blood.

So should men who have ever had sex with men be allowed to give blood? This week's podcast discusses the issue alongside a head to head debate and poll on [bmj.com](http://bmj.com)

In a second podcast to accompany his personal view article, Israeli doctor Mark Clarfield talks about life as a doctor in southern Israel during the recent conflict in Gaza, and about the comments triggered by his BMJ blogs.



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