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Ethics approval in European trials, p 1302

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1281 Prevalence of variant CJD in the UK

The limited number of cases and diagnostic problems make accurate measurement difficult, says Maurizio Pocchiari

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1282 Food supplements and HIV

More is not necessarily better, says Nigel Rollins

» [Research, p 1309](#)

1283 Weaning patients off invasive ventilation

Non-invasive ventilation may improve outcomes in selected patients, but the evidence is weak, says Andrew Ferguson

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1284 Deprivation of liberty safeguards and the Mental Capacity Act

The new proposals are complex and will be a challenge to implement, says Anthony Zigmond

1286 Delivering quality and value in heart failure

New guidance fails to communicate what is needed and how much it will cost, says FD Richard Hobbs

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1288 Fall in breast cancer deaths; Larval therapy for leg ulcers

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1290 NHS beats targets on waiting times, GP hours, MRSA Libel ruling on chiropractic will inhibit debate DH lists quality accounts indicators for English NHS

1291 Swine flu cases could be "tip of iceberg"

1292 Indian workplace advice can reduce heart risks Researchers get EU approval to develop drugs Senate sees progress on US healthcare reform

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1294 Two German doctors gave drugs to cyclists Senate confirms FDA head as Margaret Hamburg

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With the number of cases of swine flu continuing to rise, Andrew Jack assesses our capability to produce enough vaccine to cope with a pandemic

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Tony Delamothe

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Despite European legislation to harmonise procedures for ethical approval, Andreas Schnitzbauer and colleagues found getting approval for their multinational study was still complex and time consuming

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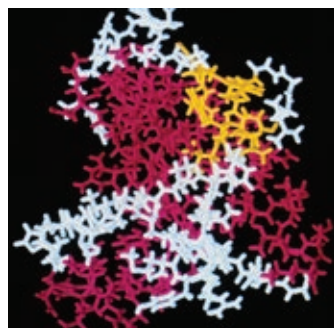
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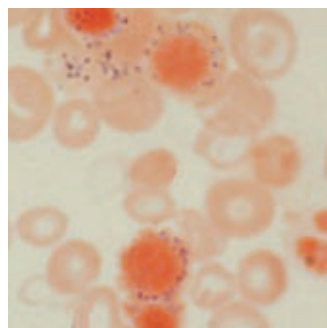
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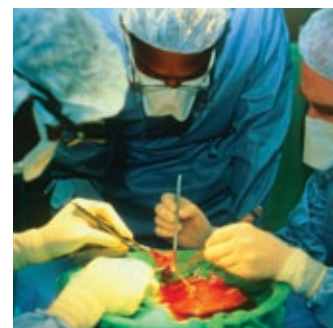
Non-invasive ventilation, p 1305



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Testing for suspected anaemia, p 1330



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RESEARCH

1305 Use of non-invasive ventilation to wean critically ill adults off invasive ventilation: meta-analysis and systematic review

In 12 trials with more than 500 adults non-invasive weaning reduced the risk of ventilation-associated pneumonia as well as shortening duration of ventilation and length of stay

Karen EA Burns, Neill K J Adhikari, Sean P Keenan, Maureen Meade » *Editorial, p 1283*

1309 Supplementary feeding with either ready-to-use fortified spread or corn-soy blend in wasted adults starting antiretroviral therapy in Malawi: randomised, investigator blinded, controlled trial

Patients offered the \$16 a month fortified spread for 14 weeks regained BMI more quickly than those randomised to a \$5.40 a month corn-soy blend, an important result given that wasting contributes to early mortality during antiretroviral therapy

MacDonald J Ndekha, Joep J G van Oosterhout, Eduard E Zijlstra, Micah Manary, Haroon Saloojee, Mark J Manary » *Editorial, p 1282*

1312 Association of door-to-balloon time and mortality in patients admitted to hospital with ST elevation myocardial infarction: national cohort study

In more than 45 000 US patients any delay in door-to-balloon time was associated with higher mortality, even when the 90 minute target was met

Saif S Rathore, Jephth P Curtis, Jersey Chen, Yongfei Wang, Brahmajee K Nallamothu, Andrew J Epstein, Harlan M Krumholz, for the National Cardiovascular Data Registry

1316 Prevalence of disease related prion protein in anonymous tonsil specimens in Britain: cross sectional opportunistic survey

pico

Despite testing of over 60 000 tonsil specimens by immunohistochemistry and immunoblotting, no cases of the prion protein associated with variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease were detected

Jonathan P Clewley, Carole M Kelly, Nick Andrews, Kelly Vogliqi, Gary Mallinson, Maria Kaiser, David A Hilton, James W Ironside, Philip Edwards, Linda M McCardle, Diane L Ritchie, Reza Dabaghian, Helen E Ambrose, O Noel Gill » *Editorial, p 1281*

RESEARCH METHODS & REPORTING

1317 Prognosis and prognostic research: what, why, and how?

Doctors have little specific research to draw on when predicting outcome. This first article in a series explains why research into prognosis is important and how to design such research

Karel G M Moons, Patrick Royston, Yvonne Vergouwe, Diederick E Grobbee, Douglas G Altman

CLINICAL REVIEW

1321 Adult liver transplantation: what non-specialists need to know

G M Hirschfield, P Gibbs, W J H Griffiths

PRACTICE

1328 Guidelines:

Newer agents for blood glucose control in type 2 diabetes: summary of NICE guidance

This is one of a series of *BMJ* summaries of new guidelines, which are based on the best available evidence

Amanda I Adler, Elizabeth J Shaw, Tim Stokes, Francis Ruiz, on behalf of the Guideline Development Group

1330 Rational testing:

Investigating suspected anaemia

Often a blood count only is not sufficient for prompt diagnosis of suspected anaemia. This article details the additional tests that should be performed

James Uprichard, Barbara J Bain

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SETH WENIG/AP/PA

PICTURE OF THE WEEK

People lounging in the middle of Broadway in New York city's Times Square. The city has closed parts of Broadway to reduce traffic flow, improve safety for pedestrians, and reduce pollution.

THE WEEK IN NUMBERS

600 People receiving new livers each year in the UK (Clinical Review, p 1321)

0.29 Relative risk of ventilator associated pneumonia with non-invasive weaning compared with invasive weaning (Research, p 1305)

€400 Median cost of ethical approval for a multinational study in the European Union (Analysis, p 1302)

£158 000 Annual mean salary of NHS foundation trust chief executives; pay rose 7.5% for managers in 2008 (Editorial, p 1286)

350 million Annual number of prescriptions of psychotropic drugs in the US in 2005 (Review of the Week, p 1333)

THE WEEK IN QUOTES

“Non-invasive ventilation should preferentially be used in patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease” (Research, p 1305)

“New drugs have become available for blood glucose control” (Guidelines, p 1328)

“Fear of a pandemic has already sent governments rushing to protect their own citizens rather than working cooperatively with others” (Feature, p 1298)

“Prognosis simply means foreseeing, predicting, or estimating the probability or risk of future conditions” (Research Methods & Reporting, p 1317)

“Priestly celibacy is . . . not part of the church's infallible dogma” (Observations, p 1300)

EDITOR'S CHOICE

Ignorance and certainty



ON THE COVER: Computer artwork of part of a prion protein.

Editorial, p 1281

Research, p 1316

Most weeks the *BMJ*, like most other journals, adds small bits of knowledge to what we already know. But we also accumulate more things that we don't know—and this week's issue has some important bits of ignorance.

We still don't, for example, know how many cases of variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (caused by exposure to bovine spongiform encephalopathy in cattle) there might be. The study by Jonathan Clewley and colleagues tested 63 007 tonsils and detected no disease related prion protein, but the confidence interval was 0 to 289 cases per million, lower than but still consistent with an earlier prevalence study done in appendixes (p 1316). As Maurizio Pocchiari says in his editorial, predicting numbers of vCJD carriers remains difficult, and repeating surveys in tissue specimens may not be helpful. He thinks, however, that these negative findings mean that other countries don't need to carry out such studies—because exposure to the BSE agent was much lower than in the UK (p 1281).

Another generator of ignorance is H1N1 flu. Andrew Jack discusses the problems of developing and producing a vaccine against the new strain (p 1298): whether manufacturers should switch production to vaccines directed against the new flu and how to scale up production quickly. He discusses innovations in vaccine production—the use of cell based manufacturing techniques and of adjuvants—but he warns that governments are rushing to protect their own citizens at the expense of cooperating internationally.

Our letters illustrate confusion about swine flu.

Ellen Wright, mother of a son confirmed to have swine flu, tells how her husband, who had mild symptoms, was told he could go to work even though his son was a probable case. When his son's flu was confirmed he was told he shouldn't have been at work. And her sister in law had to send a taxi to pick up oseltamivir (Tamiflu) because as a contact of a case she couldn't collect it herself; yet the next day she and her daughter were asked to attend the local hospital for testing (p 1287). Azeem Majeed, who found his general practice at the centre of an H1N1 outbreak, questions the shutting of the local schools, and concludes, from his practice's experience, that the number of cases of H1N1 flu may be much lower than predicted (p 1287).

But uncertainty is sometimes better than too much certainty—at least where evidence isn't what matters. In his Observations article on the Ryan Commission's revelations about the abuse of children in Irish schools run by Catholic orders, Tony Delamothe points out the harm done by the Catholic church's insistence that its priests remain celibate (p 1300). And in another story from Ireland Len Doyal describes how he was stopped from speaking about euthanasia to an ethics forum in Cork (p 1333). He describes what he would have said and how afterwards he aired those arguments in the Irish media—probably gaining more exposure for his ideas than if he had quietly given his talk.

Jane Smith, deputy editor
jsmith@bmj.com

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This month: How to prevent deadly errors and a new diagnostic tool for pain
www.student.bmj.com



PLUS

Career Focus, jobs, and courses appear after p 1336



WHAT'S NEW ON BMJ.COM

LATEST RESEARCH

Effect of the quality and outcomes framework on diabetes care

The management of people with diabetes in the UK has improved since the late 1990s, says this retrospective cohort study, but the impact of the quality and outcomes framework on care is not straightforward; upper thresholds may need to be removed or targets made more challenging if people are to benefit.

Find out more at bmj.com/research.dtl



LATEST BLOGS

Harvey Marcovitch ponders the meaning of philistinism after turning up at a literary festival while on holiday overseas. Due to speak were Michael Palin (pictured), Carmen Callil, Henning Mankell, Deborah Moggach, Abdulrazak Gurnah, and MG Vassanji. So why was it closed down by heavily armed police and soldiers in full battledress? And which country was it in? Read his blog to find out.

Is the self help industry really helping people or merely offering over simplified solutions to complicated personal and social problems, wonders London psychiatrist Stephen Ginn. Even if it is failing to deliver, aren't people better off spending money on a "change your life in three days" seminar than on a three day drug and booze fuelled bender?

Find out more at blogs.bmj.com/bmj/



LATEST VIDEO

The third video in our series on the *BMJ's* online archive (now fully searchable back to 1840) looks at Sir James Young Simpson, the man who discovered the anaesthetic properties of chloroform, and pioneered its use in surgery. To mark the availability of the online archive, we're offering a £1000 prize for the most interesting use of the archive.

Find out more at bmj.com/video

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LATEST PODCAST

An anaesthetist who exposed avoidable deaths in children having heart surgery at Bristol Royal Infirmary a decade ago now works on the other side of the world after his concerns were "cavalierly dismissed" says Peter Gooderham from Cardiff Law School.

This week's podcast asks if whistleblowers in the UK are now treated any better following the introduction of the Public Interest Disclosure Act.

Last week, Duncan Jarvies spoke to Professor Malcolm Law about the importance of lowering blood pressure in everyone old enough to be at risk of a heart attack or stroke, regardless of their blood pressure. And Deborah Cohen found out from medical journalist Simon Singh what the libel action against him means for science journalism.

Sign up to get *BMJ* weekly podcasts at www.apple.com/itunes/, or visit <http://podcasts.bmj.com/bmj/>

Last week's poll asked:

Should hospices be exempt from following national cardiopulmonary resuscitation guidelines?

Yes	272	(60%)
No	180	(40%)

This week's poll asks:

Should blood pressure lowering drugs be offered to all people over a certain age?



Submit your vote on bmj.com

CORDELIA MOLLOY/SPL

MOST COMMENTED ON

Use of blood pressure lowering drugs in the prevention of cardiovascular disease

Rules of conscience

Gaza patients "forced" to help security services in exchange for Israeli medical treatment

Contrasting ethical policies of physicians and psychologists concerning interrogation of detainees

Surgical treatments for men with benign prostatic enlargement

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