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- 603 How should we plan for pandemics?**
WHO has revised its definition of pandemic flu in response to current experience with A/H1N1. Peter Doshi argues that our plans for pandemics need to take into account more than the worst case scenarios

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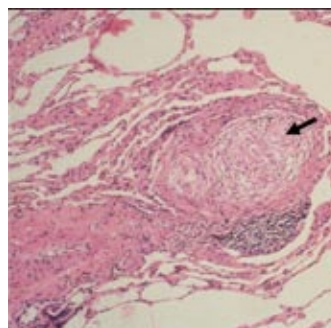




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Sarcoidosis, p 620



Nipple pain, p 631

RESEARCH

606 Effects of dietary intervention and quadriceps strengthening exercises on pain and function in overweight people with knee pain: randomised controlled trial

In middle aged primary care patients pain was significantly lower in the knee exercise groups at two years, with a number needed to treat of 9, while dieting reduced weight and depression but didn't help the knees Claire M Jenkinson, Michael Doherty, Anthony J Avery, Anna Read, Moira A Taylor, Tracey H Sach, Paul Silcocks, Kenneth R Muir

» Research, p 610

610 Lifestyle interventions for knee pain in overweight and obese adults aged ≥45: economic evaluation of randomised controlled trial

Dietary intervention plus quadriceps strengthening exercises was probably, but not definitely, cost effective at £20 000 per QALY Garry R Barton, Tracey H Sach, Claire Jenkinson, Michael Doherty, Anthony J Avery, Kenneth R Muir

» Research, p 606

613 Soluble or insoluble fibre in irritable bowel syndrome in primary care? Randomised placebo controlled trial

Significantly more primary care patients reported symptom relief with soluble fibre (psyllium) over 12 weeks than with rice flour placebo, while bran showed no clinically relevant benefit and was poorly tolerated C J Bijkerk, N J de Wit, J W M Muris, P J Whorwell, J A Knottnerus, A W Hoes

616 **pico** Risk of ovarian cancer in women with symptoms in primary care: population based case-control study

Among women aged over 40 in primary care abdominal distension, postmenopausal bleeding, loss of appetite, urinary frequency, abdominal pain, rectal bleeding, and abdominal bloating independently predicted ovarian cancer with positive predictive values from 0.2% to 2.5%

William Hamilton, Tim J Peters, Clare Bankhead, Deborah Sharp

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617 Commentary: Diagnosing ovarian cancer—more problems than answers

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618 **pico** Willingness of Hong Kong healthcare workers to accept pre-pandemic influenza vaccination at different WHO alert levels: two questionnaire surveys

The intention to accept vaccination against H1N1 influenza (swine flu) among respondents was less than 50%, even at WHO alert phase 5

Josette SY Chor, Karry L K Ngai, William B Goggins, Martin C S Wong, Samuel Y S Wong, Nelson Lee, Ting-fan Leung, Timothy H Rainer, Sian Griffiths, Paul K S Chan

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619 **pico** Monitoring the emergence of community transmission of influenza A/H1N1 2009 in England: a cross sectional opportunistic survey of self sampled telephone callers to NHS Direct

During the early epidemic trends in the proportion of patients with swine flu diagnosed by doctors and confirmed at regional laboratories were mirrored by those among NHS Direct callers who self diagnosed and self swabbed Alex J Elliot, Cassandra Powers, Alicia Thornton, Chinelo Obi, Caterina Hill, Ian Simms, Pauline Waight, Helen Maguire, David Foord, Enid Povey, Tim Wreghitt, Nichola Goddard, Joanna Ellis, Alison Bermingham, Praveen Sebastianpillai, Angie Lackenby, Maria Zambon, David Brown, Gillian E Smith, O Noel Gill

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629 A patient's journey: Persistent pain

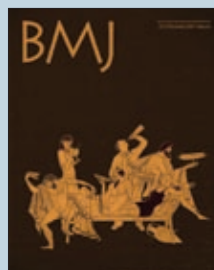
Mary Ray, Joan Hester

631 Lesson of the week: An underdiagnosed cause of nipple pain presented on a camera phone

O L Holmen, B Backe

Christmas 2009: Deadline for submissions

Please submit your articles for consideration for this year's Christmas issue by 20 September.



Go to <http://submit.bmj.com> for more details about online submission. And remember to mention in your covering letter that your article is intended for the Christmas issue (it's not always obvious). No spoofs, please.

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PICTURE OF THE WEEK

A six metre high mural in Washington, DC, by Regina Holliday, showing her husband on his death bed to draw attention to the failings of the US health system. Fred Holliday died from kidney cancer aged 39 the day the Senate took up health care reform. Without health insurance he couldn't afford the tests to investigate the cause of night sweats, fatigue, and bloody urine. See Observations, p 602.

THE WEEK IN NUMBERS

7 Number of symptoms that independently predicted ovarian cancer (Research, p 616)

3000 New cases of sarcoidosis diagnosed each year in the UK (Clinical Review, p 620)

10.7 Days of sick leave per employee each year in the NHS, costing £1.7bn, compared with 6.4 days in the private sector (Starting Out, p 638)

\$7bn Public money spent on pandemic preparedness in the US before the arrival of A/H1N1 (Analysis, p 603)

50% Possible underestimation of alcohol intake in the UK (News, p 593)

THE WEEK IN QUOTES

“Potential acceptance of pre-pandemic influenza vaccines was low [in Hong Kong], and the change in WHO alert phase had no significant effect” (Research, p 618)

“In the US today if you go with the flow you will become obese or overweight” (Feature, p 600)

“I sometimes give in and have a private cry when the ‘neverendingness’ of the pain needs an outlet” (Practice, p 629)

“Ideologues in the US may treat socialism as a dirty word, but it was the source of the NHS” (Letter, p 590)

“Complicity [in torture] undermined the moral authority and legitimacy of the medical profession” (News, p 597)

EDITOR'S CHOICE

Time for a ban on alcohol advertising



Research, pp 606, 610

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News that the UK has one of the highest rates of underage drinking and teenage pregnancy in the industrialised world (*BMJ* 2009;339:b3635) comes in the same week that the BMA calls for a ban on alcohol advertising because of its damaging effects on young people (p 593). The BMA's report, *Under the Influence*, says that a whole range of policies are to blame for steadily increasing sales of alcohol, especially among the young. It calls for price increases and a ban on all marketing communications, including price promotions and sport and music sponsorship.

It's interesting to see the inevitable parallels with the fight against tobacco advertising. In both cases industry's response has been that advertising doesn't increase usage, it just strengthens brand loyalty (young people are certainly brand aware; according to the report, over 90% of 13 year olds could identify popular products even though the names were concealed). There are no randomised trials of advertising, but there's enough evidence mounting around the world, much of it summarised in this report, to support an outright ban. Studies have found strong links between spending on advertising and usage of tobacco and alcohol, and that usage of tobacco falls when bans are imposed. As for pricing, primary care trusts in major cities in England recently agreed that the most important thing they could do to reduce harm from alcohol was to lobby for a minimum price on alcohol.

The authors of the report are particularly critical of the government for allowing the industry funded Drinkaware Trust to take part in health education.

The trust's stated aim is to promote responsible drinking, and its money must seem like a godsend for cash strapped public health budgets. But as the authors say, it's like putting the fox "on a par with the farmer": good for the fox's reputation but no good for the chickens.

In his editorial (p 585) Ian Gilmore welcomes the report, although he stops short of backing its call for a complete ban on marketing. Instead he would like to see a public conversation about our attitudes as a society to alcohol. "The problem is not just about drunk misbehaving adolescents. We can no longer ignore the many millions of people in the UK who are quietly over-consuming cheap, readily available, and heavily promoted alcohol." My own view, for what it's worth, is that (as with tobacco) the UK and Europe will get a ban eventually. Industry will lose the argument as more and more people, at younger and younger ages, succumb to alcohol related liver disease. But it will be a hard slog and the BMA's report is an important milestone. Tell us whether you think advertising should be banned: send us a rapid response and vote in our poll on bmj.com.

Perhaps Tom Frieden, the new head of the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), will take on this battle. Karen McColl reports (p 600) that in his previous role as New York City health commissioner he was known for his willingness to use the law to control health risks. He built a reputation for bold action on smoking and unhealthy eating, always in the face of fierce industry opposition.

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

Cite this as: *BMJ* 2009;339:b3681

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PLUS

Career Focus, jobs, and courses appear after p 638

WHAT'S NEW ON BMJ.COM

LATEST RESEARCH

Excluding patients from the analysis in randomised trials often results in biased estimates of treatment effects, but the extent and direction of bias are unpredictable, say the authors of this meta-epidemiological study based on a collection of meta-analyses of randomised trials. Results from intention to treat analyses should always be described in reports of randomised trials. Systematic reviews should routinely assess the influence of exclusions.

**Steroids versus steroids plus antivirals for treatment of Bell's palsy**

This meta-analysis of six randomised controlled trials including a total of 1145 patients shows that antivirals did not provide an added benefit in achieving at least partial facial muscle recovery compared with steroids alone in patients with Bell's palsy. Future studies should use improved herpes virus diagnostics and newer antivirals to assess whether combination therapy benefits patients with more severe facial paralysis at study entry.

See this and other recent research articles at <http://www.bmj.com/channels/research.dtl>

LATEST PODCASTS

BMJ Learning has launched the first in a series of podcasts in which a studio panel (Kate Adams, Mathew Thompson, and Dean Marshall) answer questions on swine flu submitted by phone and email by health professionals across the UK. The demand for swine flu education has been high, and we hope this Q&A podcast format will help address some of the many issues faced by clinicians in the front line now and over the autumn.

Listen to this and other podcasts at <http://podcasts.bmj.com/bmj/>



MOST COMMENTED ON

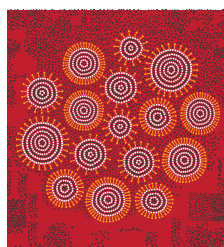
Thigh circumference and risk of heart disease and premature death: prospective cohort study

Neuraminidase inhibitors for treatment and prophylaxis of influenza in children

Pandemic lessons from Australia

Contraception for women: an evidence based overview

Number needed to treat



MOST READ

Thigh circumference and risk of heart disease and premature death: prospective cohort study

Closing the evidence gap in integrative medicine

Assisted dying: what's disability got to do with it?

Risk of ovarian cancer in women with symptoms in primary care: population based case-control study

We need ideas based medicine

Last week's poll asked:

Should youth mental health become a specialty in its own right?

You voted:

Yes: 243 (72%) No: 94 (28%)

This week's poll asks:

Should all alcohol advertising be banned?

Submit your vote at bmj.com



LATEST BLOGS

Tracey Koehlmoos writes about the lifesaving use of zinc to prevent an estimated 400 000 child lives per year globally. She says: "It can best be described as being akin to insecticide treated mosquito nets for preventing malaria—a simple and inexpensive idea fraught with complex realities. Scaling up, which is the incorporation of new treatments into a health system and into the health seeking behaviour of a population, is a major undertaking."

Liz Wager writes about finding the time to follow health advice she has received, but concludes that by the time she has added up all the "five minute" activities she is meant to do, she simply doesn't have the time.

Last week we announced that we have joined 10:10, an initiative to cut carbon emissions by 10% during 2010. Fiona Godlee blogs about why we've joined.

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