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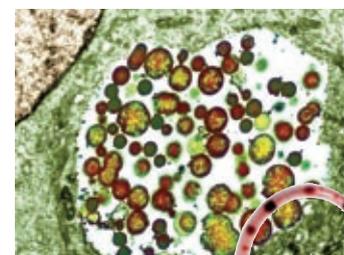
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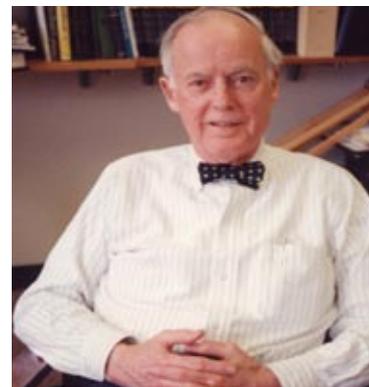
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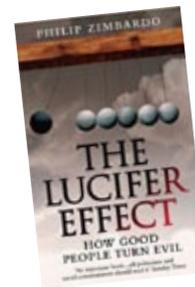
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## PICTURE OF THE WEEK

**Wearing protective mask and goggles, a dairy farmer from Nupur, Iceland, looks for cattle lost in the clouds of ash near the volcano in southern Iceland's Eyjafjallajökull glacier. Maria Neira, WHO's director of public health and the environment, advised people with respiratory conditions to avoid strenuous exercise or stay indoors if they notice greater air pollution or have symptoms. And at least 16 people in the United Kingdom are in a critical condition as they wait for stem cell transplantations using cells from bone marrow donors abroad that have been held up because of the flight restrictions caused by the shutdown of a large part of European airspace.**

See **NEWS**, p 883, and **PERSONAL VIEW**, p 927

### THE WEEK IN NUMBERS

**9%** Case fatality rate associated with "major bleeding" in patients treated with vitamin K antagonists (**Practice**, p 918)

**30%** Proportion of cases of pelvic inflammatory disease that are caused by chlamydia (**Research**, p 903)

**46%** Fraction of *Chlamydia trachomatis* infections that clear spontaneously within a year (**Clinical Review**, p 912)

### QUOTE OF THE WEEK

**"Fear of libel means that good research is not always published because those with vested interests might sue . . . it is the public that loses out because the truth is never exposed"**

Simon Singh demands libel reform, after the British Chiropractic Association drops its case against him (**News**, p 886)

## EDITOR'S CHOICE

## The best laid plans?

**Will greater use of videoconferencing emerge from the ash cloud's silver lining?**

The Icelandic volcano pushed the UK parliamentary elections from most front pages this week, but not from the *BMJ*'s cover. "How I long for a politician brave enough to say the NHS is unsafe in our hands. . . it begs for a Martin Luther to nail his 95 theses to the door." So says Nigel Hawkes in our round up of views on the election's health issues (p 894). Among many contributors, Ann McPherson wants government to stop the endless NHS reorganisations, to build on valuable experience, and to cherish general practice; Angela Coulter has her vote ready for whichever party produces a credible plan for empowering people to take more control over their own health; and Ian Gilmore is frustrated that policies seem "mostly at the level of principles while across the country concerns are surfacing of panicked cuts that belie the politicians' reassuring words." If you've not yet had time to pick over the health plans from the manifestos of the three main UK parties, Nigel Hawkes has done it for you (p 892).

It's too soon to know all the effects of the volcanic eruption on health and health services. Zosia Kmietowicz reports on one immediate and very serious consequence of closing European airspace: the failure of stem cell transplants from bone marrow donors abroad to reach patients in the UK (p 883). A far less important casualty has been the international medical meeting, and webcasting has come to the rescue for some. Desmond O'Neill found that this technology brought unexpected informality to a Dublin conference on music and neuroscience, including the rare chance to see and hear one stranded guest—a celebrated violinist—performing in his own home (p 927). Tessa Richards was meant to

chair a debate at the Geneva Health Forum about responses to the H1N1 pandemic, but had to watch its much depleted version online instead (<http://blogs.bmj.com/bmj>). And, as we went to press, the International Forum on Quality and Safety in Healthcare organised by the Institute for Healthcare Improvement and BMJ Group was set to proceed in Nice, backed up by live video streaming and other web services (<http://internationalforum.bmj.com/2010-forum>). Will greater use of videoconferencing emerge from the ash cloud's silver lining?

In their clinical review Sebastian Kalwij and colleagues point out that *Chlamydia trachomatis* infection is the world's most commonly diagnosed bacterial sexually transmitted disease, is detectable by highly sensitive and specific tests, and is easily treated (p 912). Nonetheless, as editorialist Jessica Sheringham explains, lack of evidence on the related burden of serious disease continues to hamper the development of effective mass screening (p 875). The Prevention of Pelvic Infection (POPI) trial in more than 2500 female students in London might have added crucial evidence. It asked the important question: "do testing and treating sexually active women for chlamydia infection reduce the incidence of pelvic inflammatory disease in the subsequent year?" But despite the best efforts of Pippa Oakeshott and colleagues, it yielded no definitive answer (p 903).

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Career Focus, jobs, and courses appear after p 930

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