

NEWS AND NOTES

Views

Research on animals reported in the late 1970s suggested that vasectomy might increase men's susceptibility to atherosclerosis. Apparently (*Journal of the American Medical Association* 1984;252:1005), there is no cause for concern: a study of 1400 men with vasectomies, some for as long as 37 years, found no evidence of any increase in coronary heart disease.

Argument continues about the factors responsible for women living longer than men. The average difference is 7.5 years in life expectation at birth; but a letter in "*Science*" 1964;225:878 suggests that around half of the gap is attributable to smoking. Non-smoking women outlive non-smoking men by only four years.

Pagetoid reticulosis disease is a skin disorder with features of a T cell lymphoma (*Archives of Dermatology* 1984;120:1045-51). In some patients, however, the lesion progresses slowly and apparently benignly. Speculation seems likely to continue; only a handful of cases have been reported around the world in the 45 years since the original description by Woring and Kollop.

One in 25 000 men has an XX chromosomal constitution; they have normal male genitalia with small testes and azoospermia. The September 1983 issue of "*Clinical Reproduction and Fertility*" (1983;2:207-15) has just reached Minerva from Australia (presumably by sailing ship) and describes the syndrome clearly but admits that the underlying aetiological mechanism remains a puzzle.

Women who train hard as distance runners often become very thin and stop menstruating—while remaining in apparently good health. The converse does not, however, apply (*Journal of Pediatrics* 1984;105:34-7). Girls with anorexia nervosa are far from fit; in particular, their cardiovascular responses to exercise suggest that many have abnormal heart muscles and may be at risk from vigorous exercise.

How common is proctalgia fugax—a disorder about which, says an article in the "*American Journal of Gastroenterology*" (1984;79:450-2), most of our knowledge derives from letters to medical journals in which physicians describe this perplexing symptom in themselves? A survey in Canada found that 49 of 148 patients with benign gastrointestinal diseases admitted to proctalgia fugax when questioned; most had never told their doctors about it.

When children present late with congenital dislocation of the hip the assumption may be made that the diagnosis was missed when the

baby was examined shortly after birth. A prospective study (*Journal of Bone and Joint Surgery* 1984;66B:479-84) has now shown that some infants with clinically stable hips at birth may develop dislocation later in the first year of life.

More paediatrics: a study reported in the "*Journal of Urology*" (1984;132:89-90) on 245 boys with acute scrotal swelling found that none of 125 with a positive cremasteric reflex had torsion of the testis. Of the 120 in whom the reflex was absent, 56 had torsion and 64 had other lesions including hydatid torsion, epididymitis, and hydrocele.

Of 94 patients treated for depression at university medical centres in the United States, one fifth had not recovered after two years (*Journal of the American Medical Association* 1984;252:788-92). Most of these patients with persisting depression remained seriously disturbed, and the team of east coast psychiatrists concluded that their prognosis was poor. Patients with chronic depression may not need prolonged care in hospital but they do not feel well and are "high users" of medical resources.

Diverticular disease of the colon is said to be rare in countries with a simple, peasant diet high in fibre and low in refined carbohydrates—and this has been strikingly confirmed in a paper in the "*Chinese Medical Journal*" (1984;97:391-4), which reviewed 6896 necropsies carried out in Beijing between 1921 and 1983. Only eight of the patients had colonic diverticula.

The standard poison for moles in Britain is strychnine—an unsatisfactory dangerous substance which presumably causes the animals severe pain. The Universities Federation Animal Welfare's report for 1983-4 describes its efforts to find an alternative; the French have developed an anticoagulant mole bait, but it has so far proved unpalatable to British moles. Research is continuing.

Might "*Science*" (1984;225:791) be right in urging universities to consider forming themselves into consortiums? Formal links might encourage exchanges of people, courses, and equipment and so provide wider opportunities in a time of economic restraints.

Otitis media may be more common in infancy than has been thought. A prospective study of 70 babies followed up for one year from birth (*Journal of Pediatrics* 1984;104:826-31) found that 54 had one or more episodes of otitis media, often asymptomatic. Ten developed bilateral middle ear effusions.

MINERVA

MEDICAL NEWS

Clinical academic staff salaries

The Clinical Academic Staff Salaries Committee has agreed revised salaries for clinical academic staff in the light of the government's decision on the 14th report of the review body on doctors' and dentists' remuneration. The new scales are phased and will take effect from 1 April 1984 and 1 November 1984. The salaries for senior staff (lecturers, senior lecturers, and readers holding honorary consultant contracts) are as for NHS consultants (except at Cambridge University, where only heads of departments may achieve final increment). For junior staff (lecturers holding honorary contracts at other than consultant levels) the salaries are as for NHS registrars and senior registrars. The scales for senior lecturers and readers not holding honorary consultant contracts are set out below.

Salary scales for senior lecturers and readers

1 January 1984 (£)	1 April 1984 (£)	1 November 1984 (£)
15 210	15 670	16 240
16 440	16 930	17 560
17 440	17 960	18 640
18 720	19 280	20 020
19 980	20 580	21 370
21 130	21 770	22 620

"Clinical Pharmacology" centenary competition

To celebrate 100 years of publication of Baillière's *Clinical Pharmacology* Baillière Tindall is sponsoring a writing competition for medical and pharmacy students. Students are invited to write from any standpoint an original 1000 word medical feature article on any aspect of the phenomenal growth of pharmaceuticals in the last 100 years and/or speculate on their future development in therapeutics. The panel of judges will include the editor of the *BMJ*, Dr Stephen Lock, and the president of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh, Professor Ronald Girdwood. There will be a first prize of \$1000 and two second prizes of \$500. Further details may be obtained from Baillière Tindall, 1 St Anne's Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex BN21 3UN.

GMC professional conduct committee

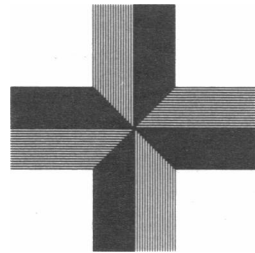
The professional conduct committee of the General Medical Council met on 20 August and the name of Dr Anil Kumar Gi Modun was erased from the Register for three months. In February and March 1983 Dr Modun had carried out unnecessary genital examinations on young women patients admitted for ear, nose, and throat surgery. In April 1983 he had been convicted on two charges of assault occasioning actual bodily harm and had been fined £150. In August 1983 Dr Modun had been found guilty of serious professional misconduct and his registration had been suspended for eight months. In March 1984 his registration was made conditional on his working only in National Health Service hospitals where his work would be supervised by another fully registered medical practitioner.

Wellcome Trust helps to save rare books

The Wellcome Trust has purchased the library of the Medical Society of London intact, with the help of the National Heritage Memorial Fund, the Wolfson Foundation, the Hayward Foundation,

the Pilgrim Trust, and the Friends of the National Libraries. The six charities have raised more than £750 000, and over 10 000 books and 167 volumes of manuscripts ranging from the fourteenth to the nineteenth centuries will be added to the Wellcome Trust's own library of 500 000 printed books and manuscripts relating to the history of medicine. The classic authors of medical history—Hippocrates, Galen, Celsus, Avicenna, and Vesalius—are represented and the collection is rich in English vernacular books from the sixteenth to the seventeenth centuries, now extremely rare. A modern rarity in the collection is I Semmelweis's *Die Aetiologie des Kindbettfiebers* (1861). Most of the original edition of this book was destroyed shortly after publication.

Safety symbol for medicine takers



Pharmacy

The Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain has introduced a new symbol of safety—a faceted green cross—to identify officially registered pharmacies. The Minister for Health, Mr Kenneth Clarke, has commended the symbol as a "wholly desirable initiative."

Pay rises for British Rail medical officers

The BMA, which is recognised as the negotiating body for British Rail medical officers, has reached

agreement on new salary scales with effect from 1 July 1984. The new scales are: area medical officer—£15 154 to £22 610; regional medical officer, group II—£18 600 to £23 914; regional medical officer, group I—£20 087 to £25 445. The individual salaries will also be increased by 6.8% for area medical officers and by 6.9% for regional medical officers.

BMA urges doctors to monitor implementation of Griffiths proposals

Health authorities are in the process of appointing general managers in accordance with the proposals in the health circular HC(84)13 (9 June, p 1776). The BMA has been asking the general practitioner and consultant members of district management teams to ensure that whoever is appointed general manager at district level commands the confidence of the profession. If the representatives on the team are unhappy about the appointment they should inform the district health authority and the BMA. Ministers have assured the BMA that the cooperation of the profession is essential if the Griffiths proposals are to work.

Control of substances hazardous to health

The Health and Safety Commission has issued a consultative document proposing new regulations to control substances hazardous to health. As well as draft regulations the document contains a general approved code of practice and an approved code of practice on the control of carcinogens. Separate consultative documents with approved codes of practice on the control of vinyl chloride at work and fumigation have also been published. The commission is consulting interested organisations on the proposals and comments have been requested by 1 March 1985.

People in the news

Dr George Kerr has been appointed the new director of the national development team for mentally handicapped people.

COMING EVENTS

British Medical Association East Anglian Regional Office—Sports injuries symposium, 20 October, Cambridge. Details from the office, 10 Downing Street, Cambridge CH2 3DS. (Tel 0223 64539.)

SOCIETIES AND LECTURES

For attending lectures marked * a fee is charged or a ticket is required. Applications should be made first to the institutions concerned.

Wednesday 12 September

ROYAL MASONIC HOSPITAL—7 pm, Mr R D Rosin: Surgical oncology. (Preceded by refreshments, 6.30 pm.)

ROYAL POSTGRADUATE MEDICAL SCHOOL—Stamp Lecture Theatre, 10.15 am, medical staff round.

Thursday 13 September

QUEEN CHARLOTTE'S MATERNITY HOSPITAL—12.15 pm, Dr Tom Lissauer: Polycythaemia in the newborn.

BMA NOTICES

Division meetings

Members proposing to attend meetings marked * are asked to notify in advance the honorary secretary concerned.

Barnet and Finchley—At Willesden Hospital, Wednesday 12 September, 8.30 pm, invitation from Willesden Hospital Medical Society to address by Dr John Marks: "Medical politicians: do we need them?" (Preceded by buffet supper 7 pm.)*

Bath District—At Postgraduate Medical Centre, Royal United Hospital, Tuesday 11 September, 8 pm, discussion led by Mr Frank Wells: "Griffiths in the Bath Health District."

Bury—At Postgraduate Centre, Bury General Hospital, Tuesday 11 September, 8 pm, agm.

Derby—At Seminar Room, Derbyshire Royal Infirmary, Wednesday 12 September, 8 pm, agm.

Gwynedd—At Royal Oak Hotel, Betws y Coed, Friday 14 September, 8 for 8.30 pm, annual dinner with the Gwynedd Legal Association.*

Nottingham—At Postgraduate Centre, Nottingham City Hospital, Wednesday 12 September, 8 pm, agm.

Rochdale—At Bateman Centre, Birch Hill Hospital, Thursday 13 September, agm.

Southend on Sea—At Porters, Saturday 15 September, 7.30 pm, chairman's reception.* (Spouses welcome.)

South West Wales—At Ivybush Royal Hotel, Wednesday 12 September, 7.30 for 8 pm, business meeting. At Ivybush Royal Hotel, Saturday 15 September, 7.30 for 8 pm, dinner meeting, speaker Mr G Roberts, president elect: "The House of Hanover with some related social and obstetric aspects."*

Regional Meetings

East Anglian Regional Council—At Bell Hotel, Thetford, Sunday 9 September, 10.30 am.

North West Thames Regional Committee for Community Medicine and Community Health—At BMA House, Monday 10 September, 5.30 pm.

Central meetings

	SEPTEMBER
12 Wed	Central ethical committee, 10 am.
12 Wed	General purposes subcommittee (CCHMS), 10 am.
13 Thurs	Organisation committee, 10 am.
13 Thurs	Negotiating subcommittee (CCHMS), 10 am.
14 Fri	Central Committee for Community Medicine and Community Health, 10 am.
14 Fri	Scottish council (7 Drumsheugh Gardens, Edinburgh EH3 7QP), 10.45 am.

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