

EDITOR, BMJ USA

Ronald M Davis, MD, MA
Director
Center for Health Promotion
and Disease Prevention
Henry Ford Health System
Detroit, Michigan

EDITOR, BMJ

Dr. Richard Smith
Chief Executive
BMJ Publishing Group
London, UK

ASSOCIATE EDITORS

John C Roberts, MD
Staff Physician
General Internal Medicine
Madrona Medical Group
Bellingham, Washington

Jo Ann Rosenfeld, MD
Assistant Professor of Medicine
Johns Hopkins University School of
Medicine
Baltimore, Maryland

Rebekah Wang-Cheng, MD
Professor of Medicine
Medical College of Wisconsin
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Steven H Woolf, MD, MPH
Professor of Family Practice
Virginia Commonwealth University
Fairfax, Virginia

EDITORIAL BOARD

Margaret I Aguwa, DO, MPH
Chairperson
Dept. of Family & Community Medicine
College of Osteopathic Medicine
Michigan State University
East Lansing, Michigan

David Atkins, MD, MPH
Center for Practice and Technology
Assessment
Agency for Healthcare Research
and Quality
Washington, DC

Regina M Benjamin, MD, MBA
Assistant Dean for
Rural Health
University of South Alabama
College of Medicine
Mobile, Alabama

Klea D Bertakis, MD, MPH
Chairperson
Dept. of Family & Community Medicine
School of Medicine
University of California, Davis
Sacramento, California

Mark A Kelley, MD
Executive Vice President and
Chief Medical Officer
Henry Ford Health System
Detroit, Michigan

Thomas E Kottke, MD, MSPH
Professor of Medicine
(Cardiovascular Diseases)
Mayo Clinic
Rochester, Minnesota

Rosanne M Leipzig, MD, PhD
Associate Professor
Dept. of Geriatrics & Adult Development
Mount Sinai School of Medicine
New York, New York

David C Slawson, MD
B Lewis Barnett, Jr, Professor of
Family Medicine
University of Virginia
Charlottesville, Virginia

Edward H Wagner, MD, MPH
Director
W A MacColl Institute for
Healthcare Innovation
Group Health Cooperative of
Puget Sound
Seattle, Washington

BMJ USA (ISSN: 1531-5177) is published 10 times per year by the BMJ and Jobson Publishing, LLC, 100 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10013-1678. Standard class postage paid at New York, NY, and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Circulation Manager, BMJ USA, Jobson Publishing, LLC, 100 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10013-1678. Subscription rates: \$150 per year in the US (\$75 per year for students).

Copyright © 2001 by BMJ and Jobson Publishing, LLC. Printed in the USA. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form, or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without prior permission, in writing, from the publishers. Circulation: 102,800 office-based physicians specializing in primary care or cardiology. BMJ USA is a registered trademark.

Editor's choice Embracing change

In *Roughing It* (1872), Mark Twain wrote that “Change is the handmaiden Nature requires to do her miracles with.” There’s a lot about change in this issue of *BMJ USA*.

Once upon a time, physicians made house calls and treated most patients in their homes. Gradually, much of health care moved into hospitals. Now, with the high cost of hospital care, we are moving treatment from hospitals to outpatient venues and back into the home. In a study of 117 consecutive patients diagnosed with deep vein thrombosis at a hospital in Germany, Schwarz et al were able to provide home treatment to 80% (p 375). In an editorial, Eikelboom and Baker note that home treatment of DVT simplifies the initial management of the condition (because low-molecular-weight heparin can be given subcutaneously without laboratory monitoring), increases the efficiency of health care, and improves the quality of life for patients (p 364).

Systems of care need to be changed if we are to improve quality and access. Jane Smith reviews the teachings of the Boston-based Institute for Health Improvement, which recommends a radical redesign of health care (p 369). The old rule of appointment slots filled weeks ahead, for example, is replaced by the new rule that most slots are open at the start of each day.

We must change the culture of medicine to ensure safety in health care. In its report *To Err Is Human* (2000), the Institute of Medicine recommended that health care organizations adopt a culture of safety instead of a culture of blame. In this issue of *BMJ USA*, we publish an anonymous account of a serious medical error—and its cover-up—along with three commentaries (p 403). Singer writes that “we should learn to love mistakes because they carry in them the kernel of their own elimination” (p 404).

This issue features a debate about change in language. In an editorial, Barry Pless and I announce a new *BMJ* policy banning inappropriate use of the word “accident” in the journal (p 370). Safety officials and public health authorities abandoned the “A” word many years ago because an accident is often understood to be unpredictable, and thus unavoidable. A spirited debate about the new policy, from *bmj.com*, appears on pp 372-374.

As a more mundane example of change, I just replaced my car’s license plate for the first time in 10 years. *BMJ USA* is on the move! ♦

