OBITUARIES

James Charteris Lea Rawes
Medical missionary and GP (b 1929; q Cambridge/ St Thomas’s Hospital, 1956), died from old age on 25 October 2020
After national service in Germany, James Charteris Lea Rawes gained further medical experience in Bath. In 1960 he attended Cuddesdon theological college and took a post as a medical officer at Mmadinare Mission Hospital, Botswana; then in Matabeleland; next in Zimbabwe; and finally at St Francis’ Hospital in Katete, Zambia, where his future wife, Clare Hodges, was the matron. James and Clare returned to England in 1966 and settled in Great Dunmow, Essex. James took a GP partnership at Rood End surgery, Dunmow, where he remained until he retired in 1990. He was also medical officer at Felsted School in 1985-90. James was a committed Christian all his life. Clare predeceased him and he leaves Christian all his life. Clare predeceased him and he leaves his wife, Sandra; two sons; and his first grandchild on the way.

Gervase Vernon
Cite this as: BMJ 2020;371:m4526

Malcolm Keene
Consultant ear, nose, and throat surgeon (b 1947; q London Hospital Medical College 1970; FRCS), died from amyloidosis secondary to lymphoma on 26 October 2020
Malcolm Keene trained as an ENT surgeon at University College and the Middlesex hospitals and carried out research in Toronto before being appointed consultant at St Bartholomew’s Hospital in 1984. He was much in demand both in the NHS and in private practice; he had a special interest in head and neck surgery, sinus disease, paediatric otolaryngology, and voice. The latter resulted in him being awarded an honorary fellowship at the Guildhall School of Music, of which he was immensely proud. Away from surgery he had numerous interests including painting, wine, cooking, vintage cars, golf, and everything aeronautical. He bore his long illness with dignity and stoicism. He leaves his wife, Sandra; two sons; and his first grandchild on the way.

Norman Williams
Cite this as: BMJ 2020;371:m4524

Vincent Hong
Consultant anaesthetist (b 1966; q Galway 1991; FRCA, FFICM, MBA), died after a diving accident on 27 September 2019
Vincent Hong was an industrious, passionate, and highly principled doctor, whose life was guided by his faith. He had an MBA but his enthusiasm was really for his chosen specialty of cardiothoracic anaesthesia. Vincent rarely cancelled cases and was a tough educator (but always giving value for money). He led on numerous thoracic developments at Castle Hill Hospital in Yorkshire—notably video assisted thoracoscopic techniques for lobectomy and spontaneously breathing patients. Away from medicine, Vincent’s passions were for his family and scuba diving—he was a qualified instructor. He was an accomplished underwater photographer and also a diving trip organiser. He had an expert knowledge of diving medicine and became a hyperbaric physician. He leaves his wife, Lily, and their daughter, Elly.

Christopher Rigg, Lily Hong
Cite this as: BMJ 2020;371:m4523

James Finbarr Cullen
Consultant ophthalmologist (b 1928; q Dublin 1952; FRCS Eng, MD NUI, FRCS Ed, FRCOphth), died from cardiac ischaemia on 23 September 2020
In 1962 James Finbarr Cullen (“Barry”), already a master of neuro-ophthalmology, foresaw that the days of the generalist were over. During the following decade, he brought Edinburgh out of the 1930s with both ideas and equipment. Into ophthalmology he attracted the best local graduates, for whom he arranged subspecialty fellowships. On retirement in 1994, he was invited to Singapore for two years and stayed for 17. During that time, he created what became the main referral centre for neuro-ophthalmology in South East Asia, where he also extended the reach of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh with joint examinations. He and his enduring chuckle will be remembered with gratitude, respect, and love. He leaves Ann, whom he married in 1954; five children; and 11 grandchildren.

Hector Bryson Chawla
Cite this as: BMJ 2020;371:m4515

Sarita Rai Gurung
Specialty doctor in paediatrics South West Acute Hospital, Northern Ireland (b 1965; q Assam Medical College, Dibrugarh, Assam, India, 1992; MRCPCH), died from acute left front temporal haemorrhage and rheumatic heart disease on 6 October 2020
Sarita Rai Gurung moved to the UK in 2004 to start as a clinical observer in paediatrics at the Hull Royal Infirmary. In 2008 she moved to London and worked at various hospitals there as well as the South West Acute Hospital in Northern Ireland. Personal circumstances prompted a move into short term roles. Sarita was the centre of her family, who had all moved to London from Nepal. She loved gardening and flowers, was a devout Christian, loved to be silly at times, was generous and kind to all, cooked great meals, and brought colour and joy to family and friends. She leaves her husband, Dan B Gurung, and a son.

Ashish Gurung
Cite this as: BMJ 2020;371:m4520

Michael Allbeson
GP (b 1947, q Manchester 1970; MRCP, MRCGP), died from Parkinson’s disease on 8 August 2020
Michael Allbeson (“Mike”) was humane, irreverent, inspiring, and occasionally exasperating. He was also a bibliophile, wordsmith, cyclist, photographer, prankster, pudding enthusiast, and a much loved son, husband, brother, father, father-in-law, grandpa, friend, and GP. After qualifying and doing house jobs, Mike married Sue. Together they went to Papua New Guinea to do Voluntary Service Overseas, miles from anywhere. They worked in Australia, where their daughter was born, and then returned to the UK to do some hospital training jobs and pass his royal college membership exams. He settled in Penkridge to work as a GP. He retired early because of increasingly debilitating Parkinson’s disease, which he bore with courage and a determination. He leaves Sue, who cared for him so well; two children; and their children.

Richard Feinmann
Cite this as: BMJ 2020;371:m4513
Peter Sleight
Visionary cardiologist and inspiring leader

Peter Sleight (b 1929; q St Bartholomew’s Hospital, London, 1953; MD, DM, FRCP, FACC), died from natural causes on 7 October 2020

Peter Sleight, a professor at Oxford University, helped to transform heart attack treatment and prevent cardiovascular disease with angiotensin converting enzyme inhibitors and statins. He was among the first cardiologists to recognise the critical importance of large simple trials involving thousands of patients and rigorous statistical analysis of treatment outcomes.

This put him at odds with fellow cardiologists, who regarded statisticians, according to one commentator, as “aliens and Martians.” But Sleight’s reputation persuaded clinicians all over the world to enrol patients into the groundbreaking Isis trials.

Cardiology sceptics were finally won over in 1988 when Isis-2 showed that prompt treatment of suspected heart attacks with streptokinase and with aspirin each reduced 30 day mortality by about a quarter, while jointly halving 30 day mortality. That the two clot busters, acting in different ways, complemented one another was a surprise.

Having recruited some 140,000 patients, the four Isis trials had a profound impact on the emerging science of evidence based medicine. Isis methodology influenced the design of studies into other conditions, including the Recovery trial, which showed that dexamethasone reduces covid-19 mortality.

Sleight, a celebrated leader and mentor, inspired great loyalty. Moreover, unlike many eminent men, he was able to laugh at himself—for example, when medical students lampooned him himself—for example, when medical students lampooned him

Sleight’s reputation persuaded clinicians all over the world to enrol patients into the Isis trials as Professor BA Flight after he had flown to Tokyo for the day. His peripatetic lifestyle also prompted this line in a student review: “What’s the difference between God and Peter Sleight? Answer: God is everywhere, but Peter Sleight is never in Oxford.”

Inspiration
Born in Hull and brought up in Leeds, Sleight did national service with the Royal Air Force before starting as a junior doctor. His early career was extraordinary because of the stream of luminaries and inspirational figures he worked with.

In London, there was Paul Wood at the Brompton Hospital and Aubrey Leatham at St George’s Hospital. Dubbed the “gale force of British cardiology,” Wood was credited with transforming London into an international centre of excellence. Leatham turned the art of auscultation into a science—until then listening to the heart had been a hit-and-miss business.

In San Francisco—where Sleight went to spruce up his CV—there was Maurice Sokolow and Julius Comroe. Sokolow’s ambulatory blood pressure recorder led to the concept of “white coat hypertension.” Comroe developed the internationally recognised cardiovascular research unit.

Oxford
San Francisco was lifechanging for Sleight, leaving him hooked on physiology. After discovering C fibres in the heart, he moved to Oxford to investigate hypertension and baroreceptors. Appointed as a consultant physician at the Radcliffe Infirmary in 1964, he split his time between clinical medicine and research. In 1973 he became the first Field Marshal Alexander professor of cardiovascular medicine.

His path to prominence at Oxford coincided with that of the statistician Richard Peto, who convinced Sleight that the methodology of existing trials was too complicated and too small to give unequivocal results. The spectacular impact of antibiotics had created the impression that trials with just a few hundred people would be enough to establish a drug’s efficacy.

Isis evolved out of a collaboration between Sleight, Peto, and Salim Yusuf, a Rhodes scholar from India. In line with Einstein’s reported observation that things should be made as simple as possible, but no simpler, the first Isis study randomised 16,000 cases of suspected heart attack to receive an intravenous β blocker or nothing. The only information retained thereafter was whether the patient was dead or alive two weeks later. Intravenous atenolol was found substantially to improve heart attack recovery.

Although Sleight officially “retired” in 1994, he co-chaired several more large trials. In the last 10 years of his life, he generated global media interest after demonstrating with his Italian colleague Luciano Bernardi that certain musical rhythms lowered blood pressure. In 2014, aged 85, he gave the Paton lecture to the Physiological Society.

Sleight met his future wife, Gillian, at Barts in 1950. She was a fellow medical student and later a public health specialist. They married three years later. They lived in the Oxfordshire village of Wheatley for more than 50 years before moving together to a care home in 2018. Sleight leaves Gillian and their children.

John Illman, London
john@jicmedia.org

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