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Turning elderly people into patients, p 603



Blood donations from men who have had sex with men, pp 568, 572

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- 553 **Sun protection in teenagers**
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India's health ministry is accused of vaccine problems
New "academic trusts" will signal the start of reorganisation of health services in England
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Dutch and UK doctors lead in information technology use
New website brings history of medicine into 21st century
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Some developed countries now accept blood donations from men who have ever had sex with men, but most do not. Richard Hurley asks why

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Bob Roehr says yes; Jay P Brooks says no

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REVIEW OF THE WEEK

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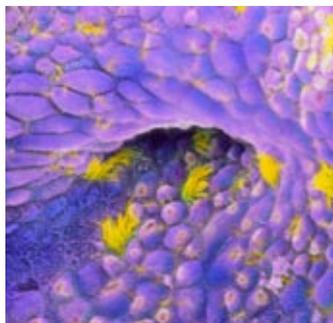
- 608 **Disgusting reactions, and other stories**

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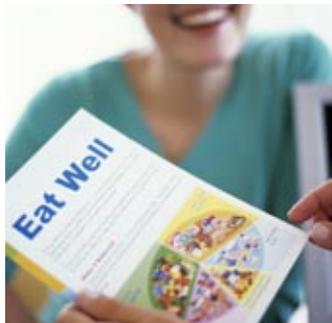
Obituary: Clinical pharmacologist who revolutionised the *BNF*, p 601





PROFESSORS P M MOTT AND S MAKABE/SPL

Fertility drugs and risk of ovarian cancer, p 580



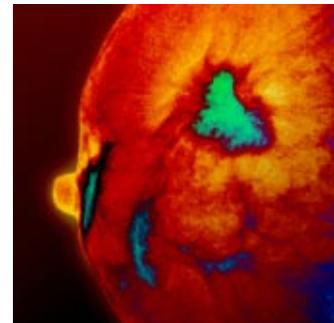
IAN HOOTON/SPL

Nutrition and lifestyle recommendations before pregnancy, p 586



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Difficult to treat asthma in adults, p 593



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Diagnosis and treatment of early breast cancer, p 598

RESEARCH

- 577 Resting heart rate as a low tech predictor of coronary events in women: prospective cohort study**
Among nearly 130 000 postmenopausal women in the Women's Health Initiative cohort resting heart rate independently predicted coronary events, with the highest risk among the 50-64 year olds
Judith Hsia, Joseph C Larson, Judith K Ockene, Gloria E Sarto, Matthew A Allison, Susan L Hendrix, Jennifer G Robinson, Andrea Z LaCroix, JoAnn E Manson, for the Women's Health Initiative Research Group
- 580 Use of fertility drugs and risk of ovarian cancer: Danish population based cohort study**
In more than 54 000 women followed to a mean age of 47 there was no convincing overall risk association, not even after adjustment for causes of infertility and any use of oral contraception
Allan Jensen, Heidi Sharif, Kirsten Frederiksen, Susanne Krüger Kjær
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- 583 Abuse of people with dementia by family carers: representative cross sectional survey**
Most of the 220 people caring for relatives at home admitted to some abusive behaviour, most of it psychological, and a third reported important levels of such abuse
Claudia Cooper, Amber Selwood, Martin Blanchard, Zuzana Walker, Robert Blizard, Gill Livingston
- 586 Women's compliance with nutrition and lifestyle recommendations before pregnancy: general population cohort study**
Of the 238 women who became pregnant in this large cohort fewer than 3% complied fully with recommendations on alcohol and folic acid intake in the three months before conception
Hazel M Inskip, Sarah R Crozier, Keith M Godfrey, Sharon E Borland, Cyrus Cooper, Siân M Robinson, for the Southampton Women's Survey Study Group
>> Editorial p 552

590 Adolescents' use of purpose built shade in secondary schools: cluster randomised controlled trial

Teenagers often ignore public health messages about sun protection, but this study in 51 Australian secondary schools showed a moderate preference among students for spending lunch breaks under purpose made shade sails rather than in full sun
Suzanne J Dobbinson, Vanessa White, Melanie A Wakefield, Kris M Jamsen, Victoria White, Patricia M Livingston, Dallas R English, Julie A Simpson

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CLINICAL REVIEW

- 593 Difficult to treat asthma in adults**
Graeme P Currie, J Graham Douglas, Liam G Heaney

PRACTICE

- 598 Guidelines: Diagnosis and treatment of early breast cancer, including locally advanced disease—summary of NICE guidance**
This is one of a series of *BMJ* summaries of new guidelines, which are based on the best available evidence
Adrian Harnett, James Smallwood, Victoria Titshall, Andrew Champion, on behalf of the Guideline Development Group

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SOURCE: OFFICE FOR NATIONAL STATISTICS/DATA 2006

PICTURE OF THE WEEK

Alcohol related deaths per 100 000 in the United Kingdom. Scotland may become the first European country to set a minimum price for alcohol. The Scottish Nationalist party announced this week that it aims to go ahead with plans for greater restrictions on the pricing and availability of alcohol

THE WEEK IN NUMBERS

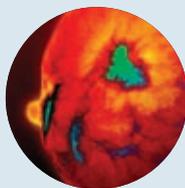
\$634bn Amount in Barack Obama's proposed \$3.1 trillion budget set aside for healthcare reform (News, p 559)



<3% Proportion of the 238 women in the study who became pregnant who complied fully with recommendations on alcohol and folic acid intake in the three months before conception (Research, p 586)



10 900 Number of deaths caused by breast cancer each year in England and Wales (Practice, p 598)



20 Number of rules for a healthy life in *Primitive Physic* by John Wesley (first published 1747)—they would not go amiss today (Medical Classic, p 605)



“

THE WEEK
IN QUOTES

“This will probably become the most read medical history textbook in the world” (News, p 564)

“Some argue that the current policy panders to and reinforces stereotypes of gay and bisexual men, with stigmas of disease, promiscuity, and untrustworthiness” (Feature, p 568)

“No convincing association was found between use of fertility drugs and risk of ovarian cancer” (Research, p 580)

“The prevalence of difficult asthma is uncertain, but it may account for 5-10% of adults with asthma.” (Clinical Review, p 593)

”

EDITOR'S CHOICE

Sharing patients' information



SCIENCE PHOTO LIBRARY

Editorial, p 551
Research, p 580

How often do you think “ethics” when seeing a patient? You may believe that ethical issues are always at the front of your mind, but is this really so, and would a checklist help? Our ethics commentator Daniel Sokol thinks it would (p 571). Based on his recent experience of joining hospital ward rounds, he gives two cases where patients would have been better off if ethical issues had been raised routinely: a man with HIV infection whose views on disclosure to his wife and girlfriend were not known, and a demented man with cancer who was on intensive care because his advance directive had been overlooked. Sokol's hosts, Washington Hospital Centre in Washington, DC, are now piloting the checklist, and Sokol hopes that others will follow suit. He asks a question similar to that posed in our editorial on the safer surgery checklist (BMJ 2009;338:b229): if you were a patient, would you prefer your medical team to use an ethics checklist?

An ethics checklist for legislators might have helped the UK government steer clear of its latest political banana skin—clause 152 of the Coroners and Justice bill. As Vivienne Nathanson explains in her editorial (p 555), this proposed amendment would allow government departments to share data without observing the current legal restrictions on disclosing data—and without agreement from parliament. Nathanson says the current draft of the bill “suggests blindness to the special sensitivity of health data.” If doctors thought that protective laws might be repealed with little notice they would have to warn their patients. This could dent confidence in medical confidentiality, making patients less willing to provide certain types of information, and reducing

the value of doctor patient interactions and of epidemiological data for research. Justice secretary Jack Straw may have changed his mind by the time you read this. If not, send us your comments via bmj.com.

It turns out that one type of data sharing has the potential to greatly increase, rather than decrease, trust in the health professions—sharing patients' records with the patients themselves. As Richard Smith highlighted in a blog last month (<http://blogs.bmj.com/bmj/2009/02/18/demand-online-access-to-your-medical-records-says-richard-smith/#more-589>), general practitioner Amir Hannan is offering his patients online access to their medical records. Dr Hannan took over the general practice of Harold Shipman, who was convicted 10 years ago of murdering 15 patients. Hannan talks of creating a “partnership of trust” with his patients.

The numbers taking him up on the offer are not huge (about 3%), but among those who have, and among respondents to Smith's blog, there is untrammelled enthusiasm. You can hear an interview with Dr Hannan in our weekly podcast (<http://www.bmj.com/podcasts>). You might ask yourself why all patients are not currently offered online access to their records. Maybe, as one responder Glen Griffiths says, this is not just the flicking of a technological switch but a total change in approach, allowing patients to share more actively in their treatment. “It's a wide chasm to cross but it appears from experience of those who have made the jump so far that it's safe on the other side!”

Fiona Godlee, editor, BMJfgodlee@bmj.com

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You can view the archive from 1946, right back to volume 1, issue 1
Thorax.bmj.com

Drug and Therapeutics Bulletin (DTB) - March issue

Managing acute sinusitis, Testosterone patches for female sexual dysfunction and Understanding statistical terms: 2
dtb.bmj.com

Student BMJ in March In our fashion theme issue we ask, “what should doctors and medical students wear?” www.student.bmj.com

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Thursday 30 April 2009 - Renaissance Hotel, Manchester
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Register by 16 March and save up to £30! masterclasses.bmj.com/GPs



PLUS

Career Focus, jobs, and courses appear after p 606.

WHAT'S NEW ON BMJ.COM

LATEST RESEARCH

**Low intensity pulsed ultrasonography for fractures**

According to this systematic review of randomised controlled trials, evidence to support the use of low intensity pulsed ultrasonography for fracture healing is limited and inconsistent; most trials report surrogate outcomes. The accompanying editorial agrees that moderate to poor quality evidence shows no benefit on clinically important outcomes and emphasises the need for large scale, methodologically rigorous, randomised controlled trials focusing on outcomes that are important to patients.

Inequalities in maternal health

This national cohort study of ethnic variation in severe maternal morbidities was conducted at hospitals with consultant led maternity units in the United Kingdom. The researchers found that severe maternal morbidity is significantly more common among non-white women than among white women in the UK, particularly in black African and Caribbean ethnic groups. This pattern is very similar to reported ethnic differences in maternal death rates. The accompanying editorial says that routine collection of more detailed data is key to improving knowledge about inequalities in maternal health

To access these and other research papers, go to <http://www.bmj.com/channels/research.dtl>

LATEST BLOGS



Our guest bloggers have had another busy week. Joe Collier, emeritus professor of medicines policy, has started his own blog now. In the current instalment, he muses on what being male means to him: "As a man I am caught. I am very aware of being a male and identify with many of their values while being guilty and ashamed of many others. As a male I feel men generally (and who better to start with than the very many male doctors) have a responsibility to put our own house in order, but we will need help. It is certainly not an option for men to assume it is not their business." He concludes: "Men and women, while recognising their differences, should work together to strengthen both genders in the spirit of partnership. Were this to be achieved we would all be so much stronger and there would be such a sense of liberation."

To comment on these and other blogs, go to <http://blogs.bmj.com/bmj/>

LATEST PODCASTS

This week, Richard Hurley talks to Bob Roehr and Jay P Brooks about whether men who have sex with men should be allowed to donate blood. He also explores why some—but by no means all—developed countries now accept blood donations from men who have ever had sex with men. And Birte Twisselmann presents the week's news roundup.

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

**This week's poll asks:**

"Should men who have ever had sex with men be banned from giving blood?"

Submit your vote at bmj.com

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- What to do about orchestrated email campaigns
- Toughen up
- My surprise at fallout over dispatches from Israel
- Measuring up the NHS

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