



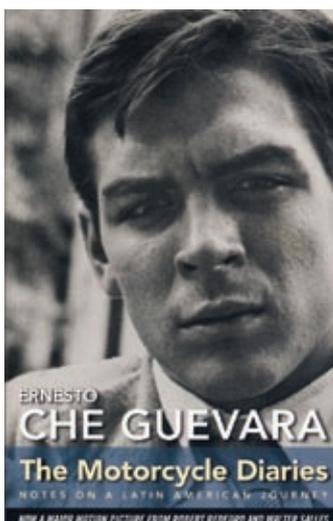
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Cardiovascular initiative in Africa, p 909



Humanitarianism on trial in Sudan, p 916



The Motorcycle Diaries, p 957

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Is still high, but only partly because of the one child policy, say Tao Liu and Xing-yi Zhang  
» *Research*, p 920
- 900 Care of older people in China**  
Daunting challenges lie ahead in providing chronic care for the aged, says Zhanlian Feng  
» *Research*, p 924
- 901 Tight control of blood glucose in long standing type 2 diabetes**  
Reducing glycated haemoglobin below 7% is not supported by evidence and may even be harmful, say Richard Lehman and Harlan M Krumholz

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- 904 Adverse reactions to tocolytics; Care in learning disabilities; The Pope, condoms, and HIV**

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- 906 Disaster agencies treat wounded after Italian earthquake damages main hospital**  
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## ANALYSIS

- 911 Quality in primary health care: a multidimensional approach to complexity**  
Good care is much more than meeting disease specific targets. Iona Heath and colleagues argue that assessments of quality must take into account all the complexities of primary health care

## FEATURES

- 914 Running out of time**  
The deadline for implementing European legislation on doctors' working hours is looming, but it remains unclear what the rules will be or the effect they will have on staff and patients, Tessa Richards reports

- 916 Humanitarianism on trial in Sudan**  
The expulsion of international aid groups from Sudan has highlighted the difficult balancing act between upholding human rights and supporting vulnerable populations, as Peter Moszynski reports

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Nicholas Christakis

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Nigel Hawkes

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Des Spence  
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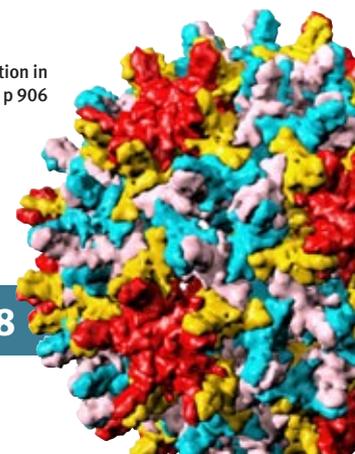
## MINERVA

- 960 Scratching an itch and other stories**

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- 952 Great minds don't always think alike**

Hepatitis B vaccination in the Netherlands, p 906





China's excess males, pp 899, 920



Physical activity in 50 year old men, p 936



Burns and scalds, p 937



Acute asthma, p 944

## RESEARCH

### 920 **China's excess males, sex selective abortion, and one child policy: analysis of data from 2005 national intercensus survey**

In 2005 there were an estimated 32 706 400 excess males aged under 20 in China probably attributable to the one child policy coupled with illegal abortion of females

Wei Xing Zhu, Li Lu, Therese Hesketh

>> *Editorial, p 899*

### 924 **Frailty and type of death among older adults in China: prospective cohort study**

A longitudinal study of nearly 14 000 adults finds that a measure of frailty is associated with suffering and the amount of time bedridden before death

Matthew E Dupre, Danan Gu, David F Warner, Zeng Yi

>> *Editorial, p 900*

### 928 **Errors in the administration of parenteral drugs in intensive care units: multinational prospective study**

Of the 3128 patients studied, 441 were subject to mistakes while being given parenteral drugs, seven were permanently harmed and five died

Andreas Valentin, Maurizia Capuzzo, Bertrand Guidet, Rui Moreno, Barbara Metnitz, Peter Bauer, Philipp Metnitz, on behalf of the Research Group on Quality Improvement of the European Society of Intensive Care Medicine (ESICM) and the Sentinel Events Evaluation (SEE) Study Investigators

### 932 **Methodological problems in the use of indirect comparisons for evaluating healthcare interventions: survey of published systematic reviews**

In the absence of head to head trials indirect methods may compare different treatments but here there were several problems with the indirect methods used in 88 systematic reviews

Fujian Song, Yoon K Loke, Tanya Walsh, Anne-Marie Glenny, Alison J Eastwood, Douglas G Altman

### 936 **Total mortality after changes in leisure time physical activity in 50 year old men: 35 year follow-up of population based cohort**

**PICO**

Middle aged men who increased their level of physical activity lowered their mortality substantially, but it took 10 years for the benefit to show  
Liisa Byberg, Håkan Melhus, Rolf Gedeberg, Johan Sundström, Anders Ahlbom, Björn Zethelius, Lars G Berglund, Alicja Wolk, Karl Michaëlsson

## CLINICAL REVIEW

### 937 **Emergency and early management of burns and scalds**

Stuart Enoch, Amit Roshan, Mamta Shah

## PRACTICE

### 942 **A patient's journey: Hyperhidrosis**

This is one of a series of occasional articles by patients about their experiences that offer lessons to doctors

Julie Halford, Laura Hunt, George Millington

### 944 **Change page: Prescribe systemic corticosteroids in acute asthma**

Change Page aims to alert clinicians to the immediate need for a change in practice to make it consistent with current evidence  
Steven Doherty

### 946 **Easily missed? Obstructive sleep apnoea in adults**

This is a series of occasional articles highlighting conditions that may be commoner than many doctors realise or may be missed at first presentation

Sophie D West, Helen A McBeath, John R Stradling

### 948 **10-minute consultation: Transient ischaemic attack**

Vedamurthy Adhiyaman, Sonja Adhiyaman

### 950 **Lesson of the week: Outbreak of *Streptococcus pneumoniae* serotype 1 pneumonia in a United Kingdom school**

Atul Gupta, F-M Khaw, E L Stokle, R C George, R Pebody, R E Stansfield, C L Sheppard, M Slack, R Gorton, D A Spencer

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MAGGIE'S CANCER CARING CENTRES

**PICTURE OF THE WEEK**

**Innovative new garden designed by Arabella Lennox-Boyd for Maggie's Cancer Caring Centre at Ninewells Hospital, Dundee. The design is the first major therapeutic landscaping project for the Maggie's organisation, which aims to provide a wide range of support services for people affected by cancer within a visually uplifting environment. The garden, which is due to open in June, features stepped earthworks around a 33 metre diameter labyrinth that links the hospital to the Maggie's Centre building designed by Frank Gehry.**

**THE WEEK IN NUMBERS**

**40** Number of systematic reviews out of 88 that mention the key assumption of trial similarity (**Research**, p 932)

**175 000** Number of people a year in the UK who attend emergency departments with burns (**Clinical Review**, p 937)

**48 hours** Planned working week for doctors in training from August 2009, reduced from 58 hours in 2003 and 56 hours in 2007 (**Feature**, p 914)

**23** Age at which the Argentinian medical student Ernesto "Che" Guevara started his *Motorcycle Diaries* (**Medical Classics**, p 957)

**£40m** Cost of chaplaincy services to the NHS (**News**, p 906)

**THE WEEK IN QUOTES**

**"Parenteral medication seems to represent a common pattern of weakness in patients' safety in intensive care units"** (**Research**, p 928)

**"Inhaled corticosteroids have not yet been shown to be as effective as oral steroids for acute asthma attacks"** (**Change Page**, p 944)

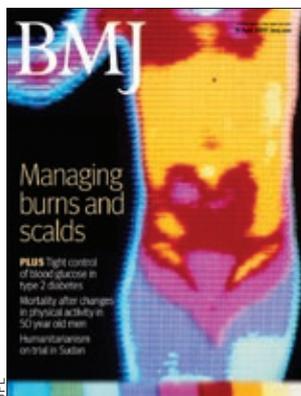
**"Today's word is quality"** (**Analysis**, p 911)

**"An excess of low status men unable to find wives results in an easy (and large) pool of recruits for extremism and violence"** (**Observations**, p 918)

**"A physician should never take part in any torture or an interrogation that may result in torture"** (**News**, p 905)

## EDITOR'S CHOICE

## Education with an angle



Clinical review, p 937

One of the things that readers tell us consistently is that they want more education in the *BMJ*. I hope you'll be pleased this week: the education sections are particularly strong.

Our cover highlights the clinical review on the early management of burns and scalds, from minor burns managed in primary care to those that need referral to specialist units (p 937). "Education with an angle" might be a subtitle for the Practice section, since all the articles have a particular perspective. Thus, the article on obstructive sleep apnoea appears in our "Easily missed" series of conditions that may be commoner than doctors think or missed on first presentation. The good news is that treatment with continuous positive airway pressure is effective for those with moderate and severe symptoms—and it allows patients to keep their driving licences (p 946). On the "Change Page" Steven Doherty argues not for a new change but for implementation of a well established one: though several systematic reviews have shown that systemic corticosteroids are effective in acute asthma, many patients still don't get them and he discusses ways in which conformity with guidelines can be improved (p 944).

One problem with implementing evidence based medicine is, of course, that the evidence keeps changing. An important recent example is the mounting evidence that ever tighter glucose control in people with type 2 diabetes may actually be harmful. As Richard Lehman and Harlan Krumholz point out in their editorial (p 901), the evidence that tighter control might not be better was emerging just as the targets for the 2009 quality and outcomes

framework (QOF) were being re-negotiated. The framework sets evidence based clinical targets for British general practices to reach (and pays them for doing so), and it has helped improve the implementation of evidence based interventions. But the 2009 version now includes a tighter target for glycated haemoglobin—just as that looks to be the wrong thing to be doing.

The research pages this week happen to have an emphasis on men. The best news is that men who increase their exercise in middle age increase their longevity (after a lag of 10 years) over those who continue to be inactive (p 936). Less good news, however, comes from two research papers from China: China has too many men (p 920) and those who live to become old and frail die uncomfortably (p 924). Matthew Dupre and colleagues, the authors of the second paper (and our editorialist, Zhanlian Feng (p 900)) talk of the challenges: "an unbalanced population structure and a rapidly aging population is straining the traditional family orientated system of care." But it is not only China that is facing those pressures.

According to Nicholas Christakis, the whole world faces them too (p 918). In his Observations column he lists shifts in the sex ratio, age structure, and kinship systems as three of four important changes in world society (the other is income distribution). He warns that in focusing on environmental threats, we should not overlook that we need to pay as much attention to "who, and not just what, surrounds us."

**Jane Smith, deputy editor, *BMJ***  
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## PLUS

Career Focus, jobs, and courses appear after p 958.

## WHAT'S NEW ON BMJ.COM

## LATEST BLOGS

Guest blogger Julian Sheather starts his latest blog, "Shredding Sir Fred," with the definition of a saint—someone who doesn't enjoy the downfall of a banker. He concludes, however, by taking us all to task: "If recent press coverage of MPs' expenses is anything to go by, Brown's years will end with the same Augean stink as John Major's. Talk of public virtue seems to be just that: talk. We live in a culture that increasingly values money above all things. The shredding of Sir Fred (Sir Fred Goodwin, former chief executive of RBS) is as the rage of Caliban seeing his face in a mirror."



Human brown fat deposits and the effectiveness of nicotine replacement therapy are just two of the subjects touched upon this week by Richard Lehman in his journal review, which also includes a parody of a T S Eliot poem read by Dylan Thomas. Here's what he has to say on a recent clinical review in the *BMJ*: "Here is a good practical account of the cauda equina syndrome, beautifully illustrated with a horse's tail of nerves on the front cover of this week's *BMJ*. Fortunately, it is rare, and any given GP may never see a case in her/his life; by the same token, it is unfortunately easy to miss."

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## LATEST RESEARCH

## Self reported functional health and vulnerability to post-traumatic stress disorder after combat deployment

This prospective US military cohort study finds that low mental or physical health status before combat exposure significantly increases the risk of symptoms or diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder after deployment. More vulnerable members of a population could be identified and benefit from interventions targeted to prevent new onset post-traumatic stress disorder.



MARTIN GREEN/US ARMY

## Fluoroscopically guided or blind corticosteroid injections for greater trochanteric pain syndrome?

Using fluoroscopic guidance dramatically increases treatment costs for greater trochanteric pain syndrome, but does not necessarily improve outcomes, according to this multicentre randomised controlled trial conducted at three academic and military treatment facilities in the United States and Germany.

## Mother-infant relationship and infant attachment in a poor community in South Africa

Home visits from local lay women who provided support and guidance in parenting from late pregnancy and for six months after giving birth had a significant positive impact on the quality of the mother-infant relationship and on security of infant attachment, factors known to predict favourable child development. If these effects persist, and if they are replicated, this intervention holds considerable promise for use in the developing world, say the authors of this randomised controlled trial conducted in a peri-urban settlement in South Africa.

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## LATEST PODCASTS

**Global financial health:** In this week's podcast we hear from Andrew Jack, pharmaceuticals correspondent for the *Financial Times*, about how the global financial meltdown is affecting spending on health. Birte Twisselmann catches up with Richard Lehman and Anthony Harnden to find out what's easily missed in general practice.

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## MOST COMMENTED ON

Commentary: Risks of doing as the Romans do

Cauda equina syndrome

Tea drinking habits and oesophageal cancer in a high risk area in northern Iran: population based case-control study

Spontaneous preterm birth and small for gestational age infants in women who stop smoking early in pregnancy: prospective cohort study

Practising safely in the foundation years

## MOST READ

Patients and the public deserve big changes in evaluation of drugs

China's excess males, sex selective abortion, and one child policy: analysis of data from 2005 national intercensus survey

Effectiveness and safety of nicotine replacement therapy assisted reduction to stop smoking: systematic review and meta-analysis

Cauda equina syndrome

Methodological problems in the use of indirect comparisons for evaluating healthcare interventions: survey of published systematic reviews

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