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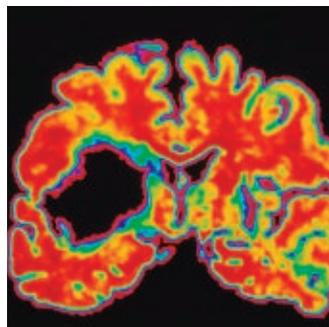




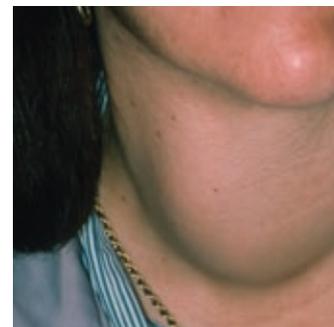
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Among patients with non-disabling complaints in whom brain magnetic resonance imaging found severe white matter changes, about two thirds became disabled or died within the next three years Domenico Inzitari, Giovanni Pracucci, Anna Poggesi, Giovanna Carlucci, Frederik Barkhof, Hugues Chabriat, Timo Erkinjuntti, Franz Fazekas, José M Ferro, Michael Hennerici, Peter Langhorne, John O'Brien, Philip Scheltens, Marieke C Visser, Lars-Olof Wahlund, Gunhild Waldemar, Anders Wallin, Leonardo Pantoni, on behalf of the LADIS Study Group

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In a population at high risk for malaria, a seven day course of quinine was significantly less effective at eliminating the parasites than artemether-lumefantrine

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ROYAL COLLEGE OF ART

PICTURE OF THE WEEK

A life size "3D printout" model of a 12 week old fetus generated using data from ultrasound scans of the fetus in utero. The models are built up layer by layer using materials such as plastic or plaster, a technique known as rapid prototyping. The models were developed by PhD student Jorge Lopes at the Royal College of Art, who hopes that they will act as an emotional tool for parents whose fetus might be deformed and as a teaching aid for doctors.

THE WEEK IN NUMBERS

816 Number of confirmed deaths from swine flu globally (News, p 257)

7/10 Proportion of doctors who said they had raised a concern with their trust (Feature, p 264)

100 million Number of people worldwide who have been pushed into poverty by rising food prices (Analysis, p 269)

35% Reduction in risk for recurrence of ankle sprain in athletes on a home based proprioceptive training programme (Research, p 276)

10% Proportion of all strokes in the UK caused by spontaneous intracerebral haemorrhage (Clinical Review, p 284)

THE WEEK IN QUOTES

"It is totally unacceptable for guideline developers to . . . have their professional integrity called into question" (Letter, p 253)

"NHS employers should now allow medical practitioners to bring a legal representative to disciplinary hearings" (News, p 258)

"Older people with extensive age related changes in white matter are at high risk of functional decline over the next three years" (Research, p 279)

"Antihistamines have no proved clinical effect on the immediate and life threatening symptoms of anaphylaxis" (Practice, 290)

"Were you outraged by those professionals who turned a blind eye to the likes of Robert Maxwell, Equitable Life, Shipman . . . ?" (Personal View, p 299)

EDITOR'S CHOICE

Transparency



Feature, p 264
Personal View, p 299

Transparency is a major theme in this week's *BMJ*. It's explicit in Rosalind Smyth's editorial on making information about clinical trials publicly available (p 250). She explains how trial registration in Europe has come through an unusual route, through regulations on testing drugs for use in children. These require all trials of paediatric drugs conducted in Europe to be made publicly available on the EudraCT database. There seemed no logic to insisting on information on trials in children but not in adults, so now the database will include protocols of all trials, with a requirement for results to be available too.

Perhaps surprisingly, transparency also emerges as an important element in improving the world's supply of healthy food. In their article on the causes and effects of rising food prices Karen Lock and colleagues describe how agricultural subsidies favour high fat, energy dense foods at the expense of healthy ones such as fruit and vegetables (p 269). Changing these policies requires action at a global level because of the influence of large producers in forums like the World Trade Organization. Indeed, in his accompanying editorial, Tim Lobstein argues that the intractable problems in food policy lie in "the power relationships . . . between highly financed corporations . . . and the governmental agencies such as the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, the World Health Organization, and the World Trade Organization" (p 249). These dealings occur mostly out of view and "need to become transparent, routinely documented, and exposed to challenge and accountability."

Transparency is, of course, implicit in what whistleblowers do. In this week's feature Jane

Cassidy describes some well known episodes of whistleblowing—and what happened to the whistleblowers (p 264). Too often organisations find it easier to suppress the message and vilify the messenger than to tackle the problem that the whistleblower has identified. Dr Steve Bolsin, who first drew attention to high mortality rates in babies undergoing cardiac surgery at Bristol Royal Infirmary, now works in Australia. He thinks that the more supportive culture in Australia, together with a strictly enforced public interest disclosure law, makes it easier for doctors there to speak out and prevent problems.

John Roddick's Personal View, however, suggests that, in Britain at least, the problem of whistleblowing isn't confined to medicine (p 299). He's a retired engineer who thinks that the corporate climate and other pressures make it difficult for professionals to make a stand. But he wants to encourage them to reassert their "true professionalism" and proposes that the professions should band together to provide confidential support and advice for those in other disciplines who face an incident that compromises their integrity.

Meanwhile Bob Roehr reports that it is Barack Obama's failure to level with the public, by focusing on abstract principles rather than detail, that has delayed until autumn a vote on US healthcare reform (p 260). In his Observations column Doug Kamerow observes despairingly that no one in US health care wants to give anything up—and nobody wants to be the one who says no to inappropriate care (p 268).

Jane Smith, deputy editor, *BMJ* jsmith@bmj.com

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PLUS

Career Focus, jobs, and courses appear after p 302



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LATEST RESEARCH

Cervical screening according to age and HPV status

Cervical screening in women aged 20-24 has little or no impact on rates of invasive cervical cancer up to age 30, according to this UK population based case-control study of prospectively recorded data. By contrast, screening older women leads to a substantial reduction in incidence of and mortality from cervical cancer, say Peter Sasieni and colleagues. A simultaneously published population based cohort study from Costa Rica concludes that testing for short term HPV persistence might be clinically useful for assessing the risk of cervical intraepithelial neoplasia grade II+ among women who test positive for carcinogenic HPV. The accompanying editorial confirms that cytological screening under age 25 has very low effectiveness but concludes that after that, HPV genotyping helps to stratify risk.

Performance evaluation of a new rapid urine test for chlamydia in men

The performance of the new *Chlamydia* Rapid Test with first void male urine samples indicates that it would be an effective diagnostic tool for chlamydial infection in men, according to this UK prospective cohort study. The availability of test results within an hour allows for immediate treatment and contact tracing, potentially reducing the risks of persistent infection and onward transmission. It is also potentially useful as a simple and reliable alternative to nucleic acid amplification assays for testing of male urine in chlamydial screening programmes in high prevalence settings.

See this and other recent research articles at <http://www.bmj.com/channels/research.dtl>.

LATEST PODCASTS

Helen MacDonald talks to Steven Greenberg about his research into citation whispers - how citation distortions create unfounded authority. Duncan Javies discusses with Jane Achan about how effective artemisinin based therapies are as a first line treatment for uncomplicated malaria, and Deborah Cohen takes us through this week's news.

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Last week's poll asked:

"Do you feel equipped to manage patients with swine flu?"

You voted: No: 131 (54%)

Yes: 112 (46%)

This week's poll asks:

"Should we stop screening women under 25 for cervical cancer?"



Submit your vote on bmj.com

LATEST BLOGS

New guest blogger Annabel Bentley wonders whether in light of the swine flu pandemic, advice to pregnant women has finally gone too far. She concludes that it has and thinks that, "The conflicting messages about masks and staying at home dilute the key messages to everyone about hand washing, sneezing and disposing of tissues."

Louise Kenney writes about a new job that she will start shortly at the Hospitalito Atilan in Guatemala. The challenge that she will face communicating to patients in Spanish is giving her sleepless nights. She has been practising her Spanish a lot, but that may not be the worst of her problems, as she says: "I've been well informed by someone who has worked in the Hospitalito Atilan before that I really need not panic about the Spanish, that, I quote, 'it will be the least of my worries.'"

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