

being between 7 and 10 on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the worst pain imaginable.

Mr Bergman was still in agony when he was sent home. His family consulted another doctor, who prescribed analgesics that provided relief. He died in a hospice on 24 February 1998.

The new law requires doctors to complete courses in pain management and palliative care within four years, as part of the continuing medical education needed to renew their licences. It also requires the state medical board to track complaints of doctors mishandling treatment of pain and to ensure that these complaints are reviewed by a pain specialist.

Fred Charatan *Florida*

Carers face poverty and isolation, report says

Caring for a relative or partner can leave people isolated and on a low income, a report launched this week concluded. Carers are also more likely to face ill health themselves.

In a report drawing together recent evidence about the United Kingdom's 5.7 million carers, the Child Poverty Action Group and Carers UK said that many carers live in poverty as nearly 60% are prevented by their responsibilities from taking paid employment. As a result, they become socially isolated and many end up with stress related illness, physical injury, or fatigue.

Carers say they have no time to look after their own health, and less than a third of carers in one survey told their doctor that their health problems were caused by being a carer. Moreover, a lack of services leaves 59% using their own money to pay for equipment or services.

Jane Seymour *London*

Paying the Price: Carers, Poverty and Social Exclusion is available from CPAG, 94 White Lion Street, London N1 9PF, price £9.95.

Catto elected as GMC president

Professor Graeme Catto has been elected to succeed Donald Irvine as president of the General Medical Council, the body that regulates the UK medical profession.

Ninety three council members out of a total of 104 voted in the election on Tuesday by single transferable vote. One of six candidates for the presidency, Professor Catto won by a wide margin, with 47 votes.



Professor James Drife came second with 17 votes, followed by Professor Wendy Savage with 13, Dr Brian Keighley with eight, Mr Olusala Oni with six, and Dr Shiv Pande with two.

Professor Catto will take up his post in February 2002 for a maximum term of seven years. But he will need to be re-elected to council in 2004, when the entire membership stands for re-election.

Arrangements for the appointment and terms of office may change, however, as a result of the governance review under way at the GMC. If legislation anticipated next year goes through, council membership will be reduced to 35, 40% of whom would be drawn from the lay public.

The 55 year old president elect is vice principal and professor of medicine at King's College London. He has been a member of council since 1994 and has an extensive list of committee, panel, and steering group memberships at the GMC.

He currently sits on five GMC committees, including the president's advisory committee. He is chairman of the education committee and is also a member of the co-options group.

Caroline White *London*

Tobacco company prepares its first social responsibility report

Bob Burton *Canberra*

British American Tobacco (BAT) has started an attempt to portray itself as a socially responsible company. The company has been holding a series of "stakeholder" meetings to gather input for its first corporate social responsibility report scheduled for release in April 2002. Health groups, which boycotted the meetings, are sceptical about its aims, however.

The meetings have been held over the past two months in 15 countries, including the United Kingdom, Australia, and the United States.

BAT contracted Durham Ethics, a business consultancy involving former Bishop of Durham David Jenkins and Reverend Charles Perkins, to convene a meeting in London. "While corporate social reporting cannot guarantee a more responsible tobacco company, the process of becoming more transparent and accountable should work towards that end," the company wrote in its invitation.

Transparency in tobacco companies, however, has its limits. The meeting operated under Chatham House rules, which require participants not to disclose discussions to outsiders. Nor is the invitation list or report from the meeting available. Mr Jenkins concedes the process is not transparent: "Well not yet, certainly, and that is one of the testing points, quite clearly."

Health groups boycotted the meeting. "Where we are successful in achieving public health measures, BAT loses business. When BAT makes money, people die: about 750,000 from last year's sales," Clive Bates, director of Action on Smoking and Health (ASH) in the United Kingdom, wrote in rejecting the invitation.

In October the US based Institute for Science and Health hosted a meeting in Missouri on behalf of the BAT subsidiary Brown and Williamson. A coalition of groups, including the American Cancer Society and the American Medical Association, boycotted it.

In Australia BAT hired Susan Halliday, a former Australian government sex discrimination commissioner, to facilitate four "dialogue" sessions. According

to Ms Halliday, controlling underage smoking was one area of agreement. However, she admitted that the meeting report was not available to everyone. "The report and the responses to the report [from BAT] are public to the participants," she said.



David Jenkins, former Bishop of Durham

Simon Chapman, professor of public health and community medicine at the University of Sydney and chairman of Action on Smoking and Health, Australia, stayed away. "They are doing it as part of the worldwide effort to show governments and the public that 'we have changed,'" said Chapman.

The scepticism of health groups has been bolstered by the disclosure of internal tobacco industry documents as a result of US court rulings. A 1991 document from the Tobacco Institute—to which Brown and Williamson belonged—candidly stated: "The youth program and its individual parts support the Institute's objective of discouraging unfair and counterproductive federal, state and local restrictions on cigarette advertising, by . . . seizing the political center and forcing the anti-smokers to an extreme." □