

EDITOR, BMJ USA

Steven H Woolf, MD, MPH
Professor, Department of Family Practice
Professor, Department of Preventive
and Community Medicine
Virginia Commonwealth University
Fairfax, Virginia

EDITOR, BMJ

Dr. Richard Smith
Chief Executive
BMJ Publishing Group
London, UK

ASSOCIATE EDITORS

Paul S. Frame, MD
Tri-County Family Medicine
Cohocton, NY
Clinical Professor of Family Medicine
University of Rochester School of
Medicine and Dentistry
Rochester, NY

Joanne C Roberts, MD, FACP
Medical Director
Whatcom Hospice
Center for Senior Health
St. Joseph Hospital
Bellingham, Washington

Jo Ann Rosenfeld, MD
Assistant Professor of Medicine
Johns Hopkins University School of
Medicine
Baltimore, Maryland

Rebekah Wang-Cheng, MD, FACP
Clinical Professor of Medicine
Medical College of Wisconsin
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
Private Practice, St. Helena, California

EDITORIAL BOARD

Margaret I Aguwa, DO, MPH
Chairperson
Dept of Family & Community Medicine
College of Osteopathic Medicine
Michigan State University
East Lansing, Michigan

David Atkins, MD, MPH
Center for Practice and Technology
Assessment
Agency for Healthcare Research
and Quality
Washington, DC

Regina M Benjamin, MD, MBA
Assistant Dean for
Rural Health
University of South Alabama
College of Medicine
Mobile, Alabama

Klea D Bertakis, MD, MPH
Chairperson
Dept of Family & Community Medicine
School of Medicine
University of California, Davis
Sacramento, California

Mark A Kelley, MD
Executive Vice President and
Chief Medical Officer
Henry Ford Health System
Detroit, Michigan

Thomas E Kottke, MD, MSPH
Professor of Medicine
(Cardiovascular Diseases)
Mayo Clinic
Rochester, Minnesota

Rosanne M Leipzig, MD, PhD
Associate Professor
Dept of Geriatrics & Adult Development
Mount Sinai School of Medicine
New York, New York

David C Slawson, MD
B Lewis Barnett, Jr, Professor of
Family Medicine
University of Virginia
Charlottesville, Virginia

Edward H Wagner, MD, MPH
Director
W A MacColl Institute for
Healthcare Innovation
Group Health Cooperative of
Puget Sound
Seattle, Washington

BMJ USA (ISSN: 1531-5177) is published monthly by the BMJ and Jobson Publishing, LLC, 100 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10013-1678. Periodicals postage pending at New York, NY, and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to BMJ USA, Jobson Publishing, LLC, 100 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10013-1678. Subscription rates: \$150 per year in the US (\$75 per year for students).

Copyright © 2003 by BMJ and Jobson Publishing, LLC. Printed in the USA. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form, or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without prior permission, in writing, from the publishers. Circulation: 94,940 office-based physicians specializing in primary care or cardiology. BMJ USA is a registered trademark.

Editor's choice BMJ lite

Along with "rigorous" and "accessible," the *BMJ* mission statement says it should be "entertaining." Readers find entertainment in its provocative debates and journalistic exposés, the lighthearted fillers that appear between articles, and the whimsical remarks about the literature in "Minerva." One rarely sees this kind of literary style in the more formal pages of major American medical journals.

The *BMJ* pulls out the stops in its annual Christmas issue, which by tradition offers an eclectic collection of amusing satire, unfamiliar perspectives, and the truly bizarre. To help share this refreshing material with American readers, in our first year of publication we made a point of including a "Christmas issue classic" in each issue of *BMJ USA*. We have since been unable to keep up this practice. The volume of "serious" articles from the *BMJ* is simply too large, leaving little room for Christmas classics, and we worry that readers would find it jolting to find satire sandwiched between more staid topics.

But in this issue of *BMJ USA*, we make an exception and include several articles from the December 2002 Christmas collection. They explore the arts (p 65), spirituality (p 68), soccer matches (p 95), and which diagnostic labels to give to patients with no known disorder (p 89).

Some articles dive directly into the best of *BMJ* humor. Atkin presents an epidemic curve for the overused phrase "paradigm shift" (p 94), Pai explains the meaning of a "stream" of urologists (p 109), two anesthesiologists list the remarks they do not want to hear (eg, "These scissors are blunt"), and Dunea explains what he would do as world dictator (p 114): "I will outlaw multivitamin pills, ties with horizontal stripes, malpractice lawyers, useless expensive drugs, and hot and cold water taps that turn in opposite directions."

This issue also features articles on somber topics, such as withdrawing life support in the terminally ill, so the risk of jolting remains. But we hope that readers will forgive the emotional roller coaster and that those who want more entertainment will point their browser to <http://bmj.com/content/vol325/issue7378> to read the entire Christmas issue.

The Christmas issue also contains articles on serious topics, one of which we reprint here. Southall and O'Hare describe the death toll in poor countries due to military conflicts (p 103). Americans might consider this someone else's problem, but most of the weapons that inflict these injuries are made in the United States. Lawrence Korb, former assistant secretary for defense under Ronald Reagan, writes in this issue that "The United States exports more military hardware than the rest of the world combined—about \$20 billion a year" (p 108). Does this belong in a medical journal? Perhaps not, but the physician's passion is to prevent deaths, whether the causal agent is bacilli or bullets.

With a world at war, there is too much sadness to bear. It's a time when a bit of humor is welcome, and the *BMJ* stands ready to help. ♦

—Steven H Woolf, MD, MPH