

capsules also require further investigation. In addition to trials with clinical end points, research efforts should be focused on understanding the mechanisms by which fish oils might confer cardiac benefits. This will allow us not only to refine the clinical applications of fish oils but hopefully also to identify other therapeutic targets and help guide the development of future treatments for coronary heart disease.

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Corrections and clarifications

Editor's Choice and the filler "An extreme failure of concordance"

In his Editor's Choice of 11 October, Richard Smith wrote about the failure of communication between a Hmong family in California with a daughter with severe epilepsy and the Californian healthcare system—as described in a book from which we published an extract in the same issue (as a “filler,” p 867). Unfortunately, Smith said that Lia had now died. He was wrong to say this; she is still alive. Anne Fadiman, the author of the book (*The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down*) has asked us to make clear that “Lia suffered profound neurological damage after an episode of status epilepticus and that the parents thought that the doctors and their drugs had injured her rather than helped.” In the filler, we also misspelt the first name of the book's author and introduced a rogue apostrophe into the word “fractions.” We apologise for these errors to all concerned.

Communicating risks at the population level: application of population impact numbers

Richard F Heller and colleagues have reported an error in their Education and Debate article (15 November, pp 1162-5) that was due to a little recognised problem in calculating population attributable risk for multiple levels of exposure. This led to an overestimation of population attributable risk in table 2, which shows the impact of blood cholesterol concentration on premature death from coronary heart disease (p 1164). However, this does not alter the general conclusion drawn from the table (that the population impact of cholesterol concentrations of 5.2-6.5 mmol/l and of 6.5-7.8 mmol/l is larger than that of concentrations above 7.8 mmol/l) or the substance of the article. Full details of the correct calculations and the corrected table 2 appear on bmj.com (<http://bmj.bmjournals.com/cgi/content/full/327/7424/1162/DC1>).

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