HIV infection

Conservative treatment is preferable because of the risk of septic complications after surgery, and other causes of perianal symptoms should be excluded. Patients with asymptomatic HIV infection may be treated safely and successfully by band ligation. There is a risk of delayed wound healing after haemorrhoidectomy in HIV-positive patients which is higher for operations.

Pregnancy

Symptomatic haemorrhoids are common as a result of hormonal changes and straining associated with constipation. Haemorrhoids should be managed conservatively, using laxatives and dietary fibre. Surgery for intractable disease should be delayed until the fetus is viable. Surgical excision of symptomatic tissue at this stage may be performed safely under local anaesthesia.

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Corrections and clarifications

Ethiopia's famine worsens despite aid

For some reason, in this “In brief” news article (13 September, p 578) we suggested that it was the Sudanese government that called for assistance for an extra 2.4 million people in Ethiopia. It was of course Ethiopia’s own government.

Interpregnancy interval and risk of preterm birth and maternal death: retrospective cohort study

Some inconsistencies in confidence intervals appeared in this paper by Gordon C S Smith and colleagues (9 August, pp 313-6). In the third to last sentence of the results sections of the abstract, the confidence interval for the adjusted odds ratio of 2.2 (for a short interpregnancy interval being a risk factor for extremely preterm birth) is 1.4 to 3.6 [not 1.3 to 4.6]. In the final sentence of the third paragraph of the Results section of the main article, the confidence intervals for the adjusted odds ratios given should be 1.4 to 3.6 [not 1.3 to 4.6] and 1.3 to 2.0 [1.2 to 2.2]. However, all these data were correct in table 2 in the abridged version and in table 3 in the full version (bmj.com).

Obituary of Kurt Semm

In this obituary of Kurt Semm supplied by Annette Tuffs (16 August, p 397), Raoul Palmer was wrongly referred to as an American surgeon; he was in fact French.