The percentages of deaths of residents of health authorities that occurred in NHS hospitals varied from less than 45% in Plymouth and West Sussex to over 60% in Walsall and Sandwell (figure, and see table on bmj.com). In most cases the adjustment brought the HSMRs closer together and closer to 100. It also changed the rankings.

Comment
Geographical differences in the provision of facilities for the dying are a plausible explanation for some of the differences between hospitals in their in-hospital death rates. Calculation of in-hospital death rates, aggregated across a wide clinical spectrum, including a mixture of admissions for treatment, cure, and palliative and terminal care, gives rates that are difficult to interpret as quality measures.

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Competing interests: None declared.
Ethical approval: Not needed.

1 The good hospital guide. 6 April 2003. www.timesonline.co.uk (accessed 1 Aug 2003).
2 Ellis R. The Good Hospital Guide 2002. A deadly lottery: you are twice as likely to die at the worst hospitals. Mail on Sunday 2002 March 10.
5 Hospital guide. www.drfoster.co.uk (accessed 1 Aug 2003).
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Corrections and clarifications
Preventing childhood obesity by reducing consumption of carbonated drinks: cluster randomised controlled trial
Two errors crept into table 2 of the full version (on bmj.com only) of this paper by Janet James and colleagues (22 May, p 1257). Firstly, the parentheses should be around the second set of values (which are the percentages) not the first set of values (which are the numbers). Secondly, the control girls consumed 95 (not 5) glasses of carbonated drinks in three days. The authors also want to make clear that data in the table relate to overweight children who fall between the 91st and 98th centiles and to obese children above the 98th centile.

Minerva
Minerva was reminded by a reader that she had forgotten to insert a reference for one of the items in the issue of 24 April (p 1024). The reference for the final item (about fatigue in patients with primary biliary cirrhosis) is Gut 2004;53:587-92.

Length of patient's monologue, rate of completion, and relation to other components of the clinical encounter: observational intervention study in primary care
In this Primary Care paper by Israel Rabinowitz and colleagues (28 February, pp 501-2), a misspelling of the surname of the second author (Rachel Luzzati) persisted to publication. There is only one “C” in Luzzati (not two). This has been corrected on bmj.com.

Integrating health care for mothers and children in refugee camps and at district level
The name of the first author in reference 8 was wrongly spelt in this Education and Debate article by Assad Hafeez and colleagues (3 April, pp 834-6). The correct spelling is Rahman.