

# Editor's Briefing

## THE MORE IT CHANGES ...

In October 1997 the *Back Pages* section of the *BJGP* was born. A varied collection of contributions included Roger Neighbour on the new modular MRCGP exam and an essay on the arts as medicine. Colin Hunter speculated on the potential impact of Scottish devolution and wondered what would happen to England. We're still waiting for that one to play out. The Deputy Editor, Alec Logan, emphasised the eclectic and the 'scope for passion, polemic, and the picaresque'. Little has changed in that regard; the underlying structure is sound but we are giving it a lick of paint.

The newly-minted *Life & Times* section of the *BJGP* will continue to give the journal a liveliness and, we hope, a humanity that reflects the importance of primary care in our lives. This section of the journal could not, of course, exist without your contributions. Please continue to write for us. Passion, not post-nominals, is the criterion by which we weigh quality. *Life & Times* is a true miscellany; a unique collection of diverse writing that reflects the breadth and scope of general practice. The usual tenets of academic neutrality do not necessarily have to be observed. Please continue to opine, muse, scribble, and enthuse with all the vigour of the past two decades.

This month in *Life & Times* a typically insightful book review from Trish Greenhalgh on evaluative research methods rubs shoulders with a review of Margaret Drabble's *The Millstone* and its lessons for the current NHS. A reflection on bereavement through the lens of  *Buffy The Vampire Slayer* could change your practice and Mary Lowth reflects on doctors as instruments of the state. We are very fortunate to have Ahmed Rashid who continues to mine some of the gems from the social science literature. If you are not already a follower of his column, Yonder, then bookmark it now.

The overall theme this month is population health. We report on the work of the 'One in a Million' study which will create an enormous high-quality resource for future research and training (Marcus Jepson *et al*). There is a qualitative study on the friends and family test (FFT) by Tommaso Manacorda *et al*, in general practice in England and it notes some of the unease about the FFT. We also publish two large

cross-sectional studies (Stewart W Mercer *et al*), one looking at COPD and the other at chronic heart failure. Another qualitative study by Matthias Michiels-Corsten *et al*, looks at how GP knowledge of a patient's threshold for consulting affects diagnosis, and a case-control study examines the clinical features of bowel disease in the under 50-year-olds (Sally A Stapley *et al*).

A repeated study of hypertension from south-west England (Christopher E Clark *et al*), shows that blood pressure monitoring moved from GP to nurses and has now devolved to healthcare assistants. And an epidemiological study by Lilli Cooper *et al*, suggests that anybody presenting with Bell's palsy should be tested for Lyme disease.

We also have important editorials on the Sustainability and Transformation Plans, the work of the National Guardian in NHS England, and the state of social care. Jarvis and Hanratty lay out the liver disease public health catastrophe looming on the horizon for the NHS.

Debate & Analysis this month offers a fascinating glimpse of the Family Doctor's Charter 50 years on. We also revisit the word cloud analysis of the *BJGP* and note how the word 'pressure' has replaced the word 'quality'. Enough said.

Euan Lawson,  
Deputy Editor

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