Highlights from this issue

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Welcome to the February Epistle, and to an edition of *Education and Practice* which looks – and perhaps feels – a little different, but which contains most of the sections you are familiar with. Here is a summary of the changes.

First, those of you reading this on paper will have noticed the new cover; this is traditional with a change in Editor in Chief and because we publish on even months you would have also seen the redesign on the blue journal and *F&N* first.

Next, those of you reading on paper or as downloaded pdfs, we have changed the way the articles are laid out on the page. We think this looks better on the page, and hope that the papers feel a bit better when you read them. Ideally of course, you will not notice anything.

Finally, one of the bugbears of a journal is the white space. Publishers hate white space and so have traditionally filled it, in this journal, with adverts for other journals of *BMJ* publishing. We are experimenting with something different; I have asked four authors around the world to keep an eye on a different part of *BMJ* publishing's output, and write short fillers, not to tell you precisely what was said, but to tell you what they got from their reading. Therefore you will hear, either this month or later this year, from Beverley Almeida, from her adventures in *BMJ* Case Reports – the fully online journal, from Carlos Cuello about what he has read in *Drug And Therapeutics Bulletin*, from Giordano Perez-Gaxiola about the updates from *Clinical Evidence* and from Georgina Bird-Lieberman who has been reading *Practical Neurology*.

That last journal, *Practical Neurology*, is particularly interesting to me, partly because it is a great read, but mostly because of what it has as its statement of intent:

> 'The essential point of *Practical Neurology* is that it is practical in the sense of being useful for everyone who sees neurological patients and who wants to keep up to date, and safe, in managing them. In other words this is a journal for jobbing neurologists who plough through the tension headaches and funny turns week in and week out.'

Domhnall Macauley at *BMJ* Publishing once said to me something blindingly obvious when you think about it: "Your journal has to compete with people's leisure time." I have said here before that we have no business being boring in this part of the journal. You are all far too busy to have the dubious luxury of being bored; in the journal we are aware that we are competing not with the million things that you need to do during your working week – because, let's face it, who gets time to read this at work? – but with the things you would prefer to do with your leisure time. I know that most of you lift the journal from your 'pile of guilt' – that stack of unread journals in everyone's life – and that we have got to do something pretty special to keep you interested and reading in the short time it spends in your hands before it is moved onto the 'pile for recycling'. This realisation has made me more comfortable about writing so informally at the start of the journal, and it's made me less comfortable whenever we drift into dullness. You will know by now that I have pretty eclectic tastes. It may or may not surprise you that I have got a very soft spot for the Pet Shop Boys, rarely better than when they wrote: "We were never being boring; we were never being bored". I could think of worse principles on which to base a journal.

The Editor's choice this month? Well, I would recommend that you keep an eye out for the fillers, and if you find other journals or sources you would like us to keep an eye on – or reckon you could keep an eye on for us – then let us know. However, to restrict myself to a paper, I am drawn to Jerry Wales' paper on Disordered pubertal development ***(see page 9)***, most because earlier today I received a referral on exactly this subject.

I hope you continue to find the journal interesting, and never boring; I enjoy hearing from you, your ideas about making it more interesting still, so please keep writing.

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