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Highlights from this issue

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I'd like to be able to tell you that the creation of each issue, and decisions around which article is next to which, is a loving process into which we pour hours of thought and reflection, to try to make the correct links and contrasts. I'd like to tell you that, but I'm afraid it simply isn't true. Harvey Marcovitch, editor in chief until the early noughties, told me of having the entire journal printed out and spread around his house in the pre-electronic days. I could quite believe that this was a highly creative process. However, what happens for me is that one of the production team makes up an issue from what papers we need to get from online into print. I take a careful look and try to ensure that there are no glaring errors or omissions, and I might make a few suggestions about moving papers from one issue to another if things feel unbalanced. Which makes it all the more pleasing when, as in this issue, we get three papers in a row which appear to tell a story.

Anna Baverstock wrote to me a little while ago with her new year's resolution—I won't tell you which year. She'd resolved to write about compassion and how to maintain it, and the article, co-authored Fiona Finlay appears this month (*see page 170*). During the creation and shaping of this article the authors shared—as they do in this paper—some ideas that they use as a team as 'compassion chargers'. I expressed some cynicism—not about the process, but about how

well I would cope with some of their specific suggestions. They challenged me back, and said they'd even include an extra column in the third table if I could describe my own rechargers. I failed to provide this, and so feel a little honour bound to mention some of those things here—but I'll do that at the end.

Jessica Turnbull and Michael Farquhar discuss that thing which I think perhaps most swiftly erodes my personal ability for compassion—and indeed rational thought—most comprehensively. Sleep, or rather the lack of it. Supporting children in getting a good night's sleep is of tremendous value—we've all seen the family where everyone is sleep deprived as a consequence of the littlest member of the household having disrupted sleep. Sleep issues ripple outwards; they don't just affect the index case. I also have to remind myself of the promises that I've made to myself in the daylight—for example, not to eat too much cake on a late shift, only to see my best intentions dissolve in the context of a rumbling tummy at midnight. This paper is a treasure trove of helpful and sensible advice for parents, and for this reason I'm making it this month's Editor's choice (*see page 175*).

Leonora Weil, Claire Lemer and Ronny Cheung, in the third of this thrown-together triplet, look at how paediatricians can contribute to public health (*see page 181*). It's easy to assume that we can't

influence public health, and that the individual messages we share are not heeded. Sometimes I'll spend time discussing healthy eating with a family whose child is the lightning rod or index case for their shared obesity. I'll finish the consultation, dictate my letter, and nip out to buy a quick coffee, only to spot the family buying crisps and chocolate ahead of me in the queue. But is that public health? And should my feeling of uselessness mean that I have nothing to contribute to public health? These authors feel not—and make a convincing argument that we should be involved.

There is an irony, of course, in Weil *et al*'s timing of their chosen quote from Donne: "Every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main." That irony brings me back to my earlier question: "What renews my own personal balance?" It feels particularly odd writing this now—remember this takes a couple of months to get into print, and so, if I can tell you that I wrote this on June 24th 2016, and that I'm feeling quite discombobulated, so you may be able to work out why, as well a little of my politics. But what I'll do is that I'll recharge by spending some time with my family, and some time trying to figure out unusual ways to fit bits of wood together, and perhaps get a little lost in a book.

Always happy to hear from you,

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