

"THE MORE THINGS CHANGE . . ."

The 1930s in Australia were years of despondency and despair. A sense of desolation pervaded the community in the face of bushfires, like those that raged in Victoria on Black Friday, and in the anguish of dealing with the physical ravages of the poliomyelitis epidemic. Above all, few families remained untouched by the misery of unemployment.

But there was another problem.

As the war clouds gathered in Europe, the fitness of young Australians became a concern. While Australians in their thousands were flocking to watch the wizardry of the Don, Harvey Sutton, Professor of Preventive Medicine at Sydney University, in his address *Physical education and national fitness*, noted: "The majority of [young Australians] form a lost legion which goes to the great army of onlookers and barrackers, and whose only physical efforts are accordingly confined to deep breathing at intervals . . . As a nation we need sportsmen, not barrackers: players, not spectators." He estimated that most of the then two and a half million young Australians were unfit.

The solution? Physical activity through physical education.

Now, fast forward to the new millennium. We still have horrific bushfires (witness Canberra in 2003), we still flock in our thousands to barrack for our sporting icons, and we remain physically inactive. With abundant high energy food, obesity has now become *the* national problem.

And the solution? The federal government is now attempting to re-educate young Australians, encouraging them to exercise more and improve their eating habits. The Prime Minister, in launching this program, duly noted the inherent paradox of a ". . . sports-loving nation becoming increasingly less mobile and increasingly more obese."

Physical activity, fitness and now fatness.

"The more things change, the more they stay the same . . ."*



Martin B Van Der Weyden

*Plus ça change plus c'est la même chose
Alphonse Karr 1849.

LETTERS

- Considering the health consequences of temporary protection visas on child refugees**
171 Christine B Phillips, Suzanne Manning
- Gouty arthritis in Australian Aboriginals: more common than previously suspected**
172 Kim Hoe Chan, Murugasu Segasothy
- Access block viewed as a medical model**
172 Michael J Sinnott
- Coronial autopsies: a rising tide of objections**
173 Stacey L Emmett, Joseph E Ibrahim, Amanda Charles, David L Ranson
- Privacy: bad for your health?**
173 Gaston R B Arnolda
174 Gary C Morgan
- Metformin therapy and diabetes in pregnancy**
174 Sharon J Gardiner, Evan J Begg, Carl M J Kirkpatrick, Robert B Buckham
175 David Simmons, Barry N J Walters, Janet A Rowan, H David McIntyre
- Multisite, quality-improvement collaboration to optimise cardiac care in Queensland public hospitals**
175 Clive D Hadfield
175 Ian A Scott, Irene C Darwin, Kathy H Harvey, Andy B Duke, Nicholas D Buckmaster, John Atherton, Hazel E Harden, Michael Ward, for the CHI Cardiac Collaborative
- The upsurge of interest in Indigenous health in the 1950s and 1960s. Barry Christophers' letters to the MJA editor about Indigenous health**
176 Barry E Christophers
- Vaccines: the new Australian best-practice schedule**
176 Subhash C Arya, Nirmala Agarwal

OBITUARY

- 159 Donald James Wurth *by Peter Wurth*

BOOK REVIEWS

- 144 Learning to trust: Australia's responses to AIDS *reviewed by Lou W McCallum*
157 Hot topics. Exercise *reviewed by John R Brotherhood*

122 IN THIS ISSUE

162 BOOKS RECEIVED

170 IN OTHER JOURNALS

The Doctor Ross Ingram Memorial Essay Prize

Are you an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander with something to say about Indigenous health?

Tell us your story

The Doctor Ross Ingram Memorial Essay competition is open to any Indigenous person who is working, researching or training in a health-related field. Essays should be no more than 2000 words long, and must be submitted by Monday, 10 January 2005.

For more details on the competition and the prize, see MJA 2004; 180 (10): 492
http://www.mja.com.au/public/issues/180_10_170504/arm10277_fm.html

Advice to authors, see <http://www.mja.com.au/public/information/instruc.html> or contact our editorial administrator on (02) 9562 6666