

## EDITORIALS

- 100 Progress and challenges in the genetics of congenital heart disease  
David S Winlaw, Gary F Sholler, Richard P Harvey
- 102 Steering in the right direction? Young drivers and road trauma  
Mark R Stevenson
- 103 Is migraine a progressive disorder?  
Peter J Goadsby

## CONFERENCE REPORT

- 105 Reducing the impact of cancer in Indigenous communities: ways forward  
Ray M Lowenthal, Paul B Grogan, Ellen T Kerrins

## RESEARCH

- 108 Incidence of autism spectrum disorders in children in two Australian states  
Katrina Williams, Emma J Glasson, John Wray, Marshall Tuck, Megan Helmer, Carol I Bower, Craig M Mellis
- 112 Urban–rural differences in prostate cancer mortality, radical prostatectomy and prostate-specific antigen testing in Australia  
Michael D Coory, Peter D Baade
- 116 Genetic risk estimation by healthcare professionals  
Benno Bonke, Aad Tibben, Dick Lindhout, Angus J Clarke, Theo Stijnen

## PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE

- 119 Continuous improvement and “Continuous Improvement”  
Henry A Kilham

## NOTABLE CASES

- 120 Myasthenia gravis and a rare complication of chemotherapy  
Christina VT Ng

## LESSONS FROM PRACTICE

- 121 Bilateral acute angle closure caused by supraciliary effusions associated with venlafaxine intake  
Maria Hannah Pia de Guzman, Sureka Thiagalingam, Poh Yan Ong, Ivan Goldberg

## TEACHING ON THE RUN

- 126 Teaching on the run tips 7: effective use of questions  
Fiona R Lake, Alistair W Vickery, Gerard Ryan

## MJA PRACTICE ESSENTIALS – PAEDIATRICS

- 130 3. Management and prevention of obesity and its complications in children and adolescents  
Jennifer A Batch, Louise A Baur

## 137 LETTERS

(contents overleaf)



### THE LITTLE BLACK BAG

A lot has been written on what doctors should be — committed, compassionate, competent, communicative — but doctors do not have a monopoly on such human attributes; they apply equally to other healthcare professionals.

So, what do doctors do that others don't?

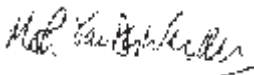
Since time immemorial, doctors' primary function has been the consultation: the gathering of information, the diagnosis and explaining of its consequences. In this process, simple technology is critical — the stethoscope, the clinical thermometer, the oro/ophthalmoscope, the sphygmomanometer and humble neurological tools.

Beyond their clinical utility, these instruments are also symbols of the doctor's craft. The little black bag is another such symbol. Its identification with doctors was captured in the pages of *Life* magazine in the 1940s, which featured a photograph of a country doctor making a house call, carrying his black bag.

US physician Martin Duke argues that it served as a badge of protection.\* This idea also surfaced in Sinclair Lewis's novel *Arrowsmith*: 'The Doctor, and the Doctor alone, was safe by night in the slum called "the Arbor". His black bag was a pass. Policemen saluted him, prostitutes bowed to him without mockery, saloon-keepers called out "Evenin' Doc" and hold-up men stood back in doorways to let him pass.'

But no more! Public sightings of the little black bag are now rare, and house calls are ranked among medicine's occupational hazards.

With the ageing of the population and the shift from hospital to home care or residential care, could the little black bag stage a comeback? If it did, the question might arise as to who would then carry the black bag — doctors or nurse practitioners?



Martin B Van Der Weyden

\* *Pharos* 2004; Summer: 14-16.

### LETTERS

- An unusual neonatal zoonosis**  
137 Emma J Best, Pam Palasanthiran, Monica M Lahra
- Reliability of parental reports of head lice in their children**  
137 Megan L Counahan, Ross M Andrews, Rick Speare
- Major burns: incidence, treatment and outcomes in Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in Western Australia**  
138 Fiona M Wood, Bess V Fowler, Daniel McAullay, Jocelyn R Jones
- Paget's disease of bone**  
138 Huy A Tran
- Time for hard decisions on patient-centred professionalism**  
139 Stephen N Bolsin
- Reducing drug-related harm: Australia leads the way**  
140 David G E Caldicott, Cameron Duff  
141 Alison J Ritter, Alex D Wodak, J Nick Crofts
- Consensus statement on diabetes control in preparation for pregnancy**  
141 Barry NJ Walters, Sivanthi Senaratne  
142 H David McIntyre, Jeff R Flack
- The other side of the coin: safety of complementary and alternative medicine**  
142 Edzard Ernst  
142 Stephen P Myers, Phillip A Cheras
- Arrogance**  
143 Norman Shum
- Breaking bread together**  
143 Zelman Freeman  
143 William B Molloy  
144 Peter F Burke  
144 Bruce P Waxman

### SNAPSHOT

- Neurological sequelae of chronic profound hypocalcaemia**  
123 Huong Van Nguyen, Seng Khee Gan

### BOOK REVIEWS

- 124 **In the shadow of "just wars". Violence, politics and humanitarian action**  
*reviewed by Ian Maddocks*
- 124 **Reading doctors' writing: race, politics and power in Indigenous health research 1870-1969**  
*reviewed by Ian T Ring*
- 125 **Children of parents with mental illness 2. Personal and clinical perspectives**  
*reviewed by Nicholas A Kehs*

### OBITUARIES

- 128 **Bruce Wilson Griffiths** *by Hedley G Peach*  
128 **Alan Leslie Nicholson** *by Hedley G Peach*

### CORRECTION

- 144 **Doctors in the Pacific** (*Med J Aust* 2004; 181: 597-601)

98 **IN THIS ISSUE**

127 **BOOKS RECEIVED**

136 **IN OTHER JOURNALS**