

EDITORIALS

- 147 Chronic heart failure: time to recognise this major public health problem
Henry Krum, Simon Stewart
- 148 The Oxford Health Alliance: old problems, new approaches
Stephen R Leeder, Ruth Colagiuri
- 150 Monitoring vaccine reactions in Australia
Nicholas Wood, David Isaacs

RESEARCH

- 151 Prevalence of heart failure and systolic ventricular dysfunction in older Australians: the Canberra Heart Study
Walter P Abhayaratna, Wayne T Smith, Niels G Becker, Thomas H Marwick, Ian M Jeffery, Darryl A McGill
- 155 Assisted reproductive technology treatment costs of a live birth: an age-stratified cost–outcome study of treatment in Australia
Georgina M Chambers, Maria T Ho, Elizabeth A Sullivan

HEALTH CARE

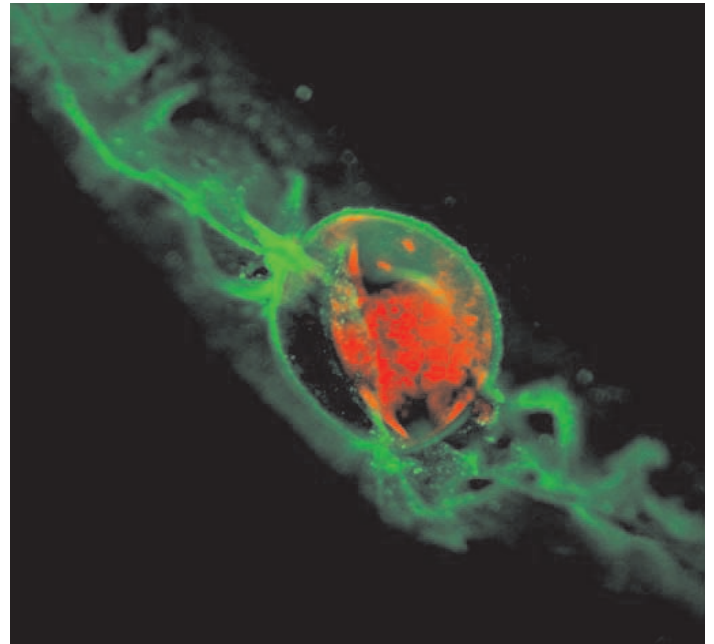
- 159 Morning report: an Australian experience
Robert G Fassett, Steven J Bollipo
- 162 Skin cancer clinics in Australia: workload profile and performance indicators from an analysis of billing data
David Wilkinson, Deborah A Askew, Anthony Dixon

PUBLIC HEALTH

- 165 Are Australian children iodine deficient? Results of the Australian National Iodine Nutrition Study
Mu Li, Creswell J Eastman, Kay V Waite, Gary Ma, Margaret R Zacharin, Duncan J Topliss, Philip E Harding, John P Walsh, Lynley C Ward, Robin H Mortimer, Emily J Mackenzie, Karen Byth, Zeldia Doyle

CLINICAL UPDATE

- 170 Vaccine components and constituents: responding to consumer concerns
Barbara E Eldred, Angela J Dean, Treasure M McGuire, Allan L Nash
- 176 Maintaining bone health in patients with prostate cancer
D Jane Holmes-Walker, Henry Woo, Howard Gurney, Viet T Do, David R Chipps



VIEWPOINT

- 180 Reducing multiple pregnancy from assisted reproduction treatment: educating patients and medical staff
Jim Wang, Michelle Lane, Robert J Norman

LESSONS FROM PRACTICE

- 182 Dissecting haematoma of the oesophagus masquerading as acute myocardial infarction
Deborah H Amott, Gavin M Wright
- 185 Microscopic colitis associated with exposure to lansoprazole
Sarah N Hilmer, Timothy R Heap, Robert P Eckstein, Christopher S Lauer, Gillian M Shenfield

MJA PRACTICE ESSENTIALS — SPORTS MEDICINE

- 188 5. Recent advances in sports medicine
Peter D Brukner, Kay M Crossley, Hayden Morris, Simon J Bartold, Bruce Elliott

LETTERS

(contents overleaf)



CAN ALTRUISM SURVIVE?

Medicine is rediscovering professionalism. Increasing numbers of medical organisations are posting their professional principles in the public domain, a steady stream of journal articles define and debate medical professionalism, and medical schools are including professionalism in their curricula.

Despite this, one constant remains. At the core of medical professionalism is the social contract granting a privilege to provide services, underpinned by expert knowledge and skills, ethical conduct and self-regulation. However, professionalism is also a personal thing, and nothing tests a doctor's professionalism more than the tension between self-interest and the patient's best interests — in short, altruism.

But there are rumours that altruism in medicine is all but dead. Surveys show that, while patients respect their individual doctors, the perception of a self-serving profession, preoccupied with protecting its patch and income, persists.

Furthermore, the notion of professionalism is distorted when anyone claiming skills and providing consumerist-type services is a "professional", and medicine's intellectual capital and skills are advertised for a price. Indeed, mercantile medicine and altruism are like oil and water.

Eminent US ethicist, Edmund Pellegrino, argues that medicine has unique attributes that oblige doctors to eschew self-interest. The nature of illness forces patients to trust doctors in an unequal relationship — one in which a doctor's knowledge and skills are not proprietary, but have been acquired through the privilege of a medical education. This knowledge is not individually owned to be used for personal gain, but is held in trust by the profession for the good of society.

Ultimately, the survival of altruism depends on individual choice and collective commitment.



Martin B Van Der Weyden

LETTERS

- Stroke among Indigenous Australians at Royal Darwin Hospital, 2001–02**
195 Elizabeth May Pepper, Dominique A Cadilhac, Dora C Pearce, James Burrow, Tarun S Weeramanthri
- Community-acquired methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* in bone and joint infections: development of rifampicin resistance**
196 Annabelle D Donaldson, Raymond C Chan, Iain B Gosbell
- Evidence in palliative care research: how should it be gathered?**
196 Tania Shelby-James, Amy P Abernethy, David C Currow
197 Jennifer Tieman, David C Currow
- The use of therapeutic medications for soft-tissue injuries in sports medicine**
198 C Scott Masters, Michael J Yelland
198 Justin A Paoloni, John W Orchard
- Mandatory fortification of flour with folic acid: an overdue public health opportunity**
199 Henry Ekert
199 Fiona J Stanley, Glen F Maberly
- The Bundaberg hospital scandal: the need for reform in Queensland and beyond**
199 Paul D Fitzgerald

BOOK REVIEWS

- 183 **Concise clinical oncology**
reviewed by Stephen P Ackland
- 187 **Practical ophthalmology. A survival guide for doctors and optometrists**
reviewed by Thomas D Walker

OBITUARIES

- 175 **John Glenton Watson** *by Frederick O Stephens*
- 184 **John Llewellyn Colvin** *by Derek Meyers*

SNAPSHOT

- 187 **Shrinking bottle syndrome**
Sarah Newton, Hermant Jain, Joane Coleman, Srinivas Bolisetty

146 IN THIS ISSUE

194 IN OTHER JOURNALS

Cover image courtesy: David A Froiland, Research Centre for Reproductive Health, University of Adelaide, Adelaide, SA.