

IN THIS ISSUE

Lend us your ears

It's Hearing Awareness Week, and hearing — or rather deafness — awareness is the subject of a study by Bailey and colleagues (*page 180*) as they evaluate the first year and a half of a newborn hearing screening program in Western Australia. Wake (*page 172*) believes the time is ripe to introduce such screening nationally, so that babies with bilateral deafness can be identified and treated early.

Meanwhile, up to half of remote-living Aboriginal children have conductive hearing loss, and the rates of chronic suppurative otitis media are many times those considered by WHO to indicate a "massive public health problem". Coates et al (*page 177*) remind us that living conditions hold the key to saving these children's hearing. But is anyone listening?

On donning a funny suit

What would happen in your hospital emergency department if the town you live in experienced a chemical, biological or radiological mass incident? Unless you plan to head for the hills in case of such an event, you should read the **Clinical Update** by Tan et al (*page 196*), and be prepared!

Lead-laden saga

A child is born with the highest lead level recorded in the literature for a surviving neonate, as reported in this issue's **Notable**

Case (*page 193*). What are the possible sources of lead poisoning that come to your mind? Turn to the investigation reported by Tait and colleagues to find out the chain of events in this instance.

HRT in trouble

All hell broke loose when the august *Journal of the American Medical Association* express-posted on its website the report that a randomised controlled trial assessing HRT had been called to a halt once emerging data showed that the health risks exceeded the benefits. A barrage of commentaries from experts, including Germaine Greer, followed. Turn to the editorial by Tattersall (*page 173*) for the response from the Australian Expert Committee formed at the request of the Therapeutic Goods Administration to advise Australians on the issue.

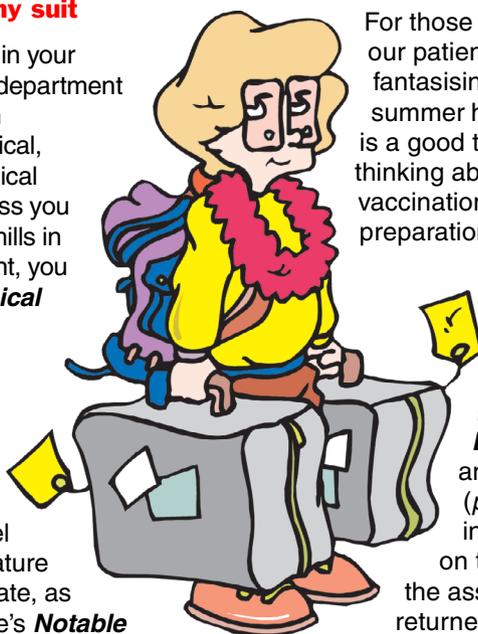
Good grief!

Has our understanding of grief been too "medicalised" over the years? Kellehear's editorial (*page 176*), for the National Loss and Grief Awareness Week, describes current thinking in grief research, with a greater focus on "normal" and positive aspects of grieving.

Travel tales

For those of us (and our patients) already fantasising about summer holidays, August is a good time to start thinking about pre-travel vaccinations and other preparations. In this

issue's instalment of **MJA Practice Essentials – Infectious Diseases**, Looke and Robson (*page 212*) give invaluable advice on this, as well as the assessment of the returned traveller.



Xenotransplantation

What do you think about transplanting animal tissue into humans, otherwise known as xenotransplantation? Just as importantly, what does the rest of the community think about it? These are the questions Breen poses in his editorial (*page 175*) on behalf of the NHMRC Working Party on Xenotransplantation. The Working Party has recently released draft guidelines and a discussion paper for consideration, and is seeking submissions, which should be sent by September 6 this year.

Healer v professional?

In the not-too-distant past, medicine leapt from being a cottage industry to a multibillion-dollar business — and doctors are still trying to adapt. Medical practitioners are trying to re-emphasise the "traditional" values of medicine, say Cruess and colleagues (*page 208*), as they define what a profession is and outline opportunities for action, in the first of three articles on professionalism in medicine.

"C" for success

"C" is for *collaboration*, if we want to resolve medication-related problems, say Gilbert et al (*page 189*), after evaluating a medication management service that involved GPs, pharmacists and patients.

"C" is also for *communication* when it comes to looking after carers of people with dementia, according to Bruce and colleagues (*page 186*). Their findings suggest that attitudinal barriers and time constraints can lead to inadequate assessment of carer problems and delayed referral to support services.

Another time ... another place ...

How many of your readers... would be aware... there could be at least 5,000 Aboriginal school children with active middle ear disease, and up to 1,500 with enough hearing handicap to impede their education?

*Maurice W Brown
MJA 1975; 1: 83 [letter]*