

Doctors confess: we're human

It's planning time at the MJA for five doctors-turned-editors. Ideas spill freely as the coffee flows. Debate turns to whether doctors' health merits an entire issue — after all, why shouldn't doctors have problems just like anyone else? The catch is that doctors are powerful forces within the healthcare juggernaut, daily negotiating, even manipulating, it on behalf of others. This somehow confounds our behaviour in our own sickness and health, which may impinge on our patients'. So, perhaps it's time to examine a subject that most doctors are really good at avoiding — ourselves.

Reality check

Even if you don't have your colleague's God complex, turn to some powerful stories on addiction (Jurd, *page 400*), depression (Tolhurst, *page 404*), diabetes (Stocks, *page 406*), being sued (Kerr, *page 384*), and the semi-confessional *Health Bytes* throughout this issue. And don't miss full-time GP and playwright Ron Elisha's account of the pathophysiology behind events when "we" (doctors) turn into one of "them" (patients) (*page 354*) . . .

Does medicine attract personalities particularly vulnerable to stress, or is it the job that makes us so? Riley dissects this chicken-and-egg conundrum (*page 350*). Galletly (*page 380*) describes how to avoid the slippery slope to patient exploitation. We also have good news for surgeons with needlestick injury (Watson, *page 366*), a checklist for your next check-up (preferably by an independent GP!) (Kay et al, *page 368*), and news on how the UK (Oxley, *page 388*), US (Brown and

Schneidman, *page 390*), and Canada (Puddester, *page 386*) treat their doctors' health. Schattner et al (*page 348*), Wilhelm and Reid (*page 372*) and Warhaft (*page 376*) describe how Australia measures up.

Families First initiative

Our future doctors are already imbued with quixotic concepts of balancing career and life, say Tolhurst and Stewart (*page 361*). Not such a bad idea, though, when one study shows psychological problems and burnout are common, at least among interns (Willcock et al, *page 357*). Doctors do bring unique qualities and issues to the family table, according to two Canadians (psychiatrist Myers, *page 392*, and medical parent Puddester, *page 395*) and an Australian mother of four (Kang, *page 394*).

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Acknowledgements: Dr Ann Gregory was our principal in-house editor for this issue – ably assisted by an external working group (Dr John Buchanan, Dr John Court, Associate Professor Jill Gordon, Dr Craig Hassed, Associate Professor Geoffrey Riley and Associate Professor Kay Wilhelm). We'd also like to acknowledge the assistance of experts all over the globe, including Dr Lizzie Miller (UK) and Professor Johannes Siegrist (Germany), as well as notable locals Dr Peter Arnold, Sandra Davidson, Dr Riju Ramrakha and Dr Alex Wodak for efforts above and beyond the call of duty.