

From the Editor's Desk

PRIMUM NON NOCERE — TO YOURSELF

Hurry up, hurry up, hurry up, hurry up
Can't waste time, can't waste time, can't waste
time, can't waste time
When you're racing with the clock
When you're racing with the clock
And the second hand doesn't understand
That your back may break and your fingers ache
And your constitution isn't made of rock
It's a losing race when you're racing with the
Racing racing racing with the clock

The Pajama Game
Richard Adler and Jerry Ross, 1954

Australia-wide, doctors are returning to work after a break, perhaps even to circumstances similar to those so poignantly captured above: changing schedules to better meet the incessant demands of patients, reams of paperwork, escalating red tape and endless requests to serve on this or that committee. Indeed, their lives are subsumed by service to others before self.

"No worries", many say, "we are task-oriented, compulsive and perfectionists. We can cope".

But take time out to answer either yes or no to the following questions*:

1. Are you highly achievement-oriented?
2. Do you tend to withdraw from offers of support?
3. Do you have difficulty delegating responsibilities to others, including patients?
4. Do you prefer to work alone?
5. Do you avoid discussing problems with others?
6. Do you externalise blame?
7. Are your work relationships asymmetrical? (ie, are you always giving?)
8. Is your personal identity bound up with your work role or professional identity?
9. Do you often overload yourself — have a difficult time saying no?
10. Is there a lack of opportunities for positive and timely feedback outside your professional or work role?
11. Do you abide by the laws "don't talk, don't trust, don't feel"?

The more "yes" responses, the greater your risk of professional burnout.

The solution?

Primum non nocere — to yourself.



Martin B Van Der Weyden

* Center for Professional Well-Being, Durham, North Carolina, USA.

LETTERS

- 90 **Probable transmission of meningococcal disease on a school bus**
Frank H Beard, Jeremy M McAnulty, John W Tapsall, Angelo M Zaia
- 90 **Willingness of general practitioners to participate in enhanced primary care discharge care planning**
David B Preen, Belinda E S Bailey, Alan Wright
- 91 **Action is required to reduce kava supply in Arnhem Land ... again!**
Alan R Clough, Bart J Currie, Maymuna W Yunupingu, Katherine M Conigrave
- 92 **Specialty training should not be exclusively hospital-based**
John W Orchard
- 92 **Malignant ascites and bacterial peritonitis**
Ami Schattner, Noa Ben-Baruch
- 93 **Severe nocturnal bradycardia with daytime tachycardia in obstructive sleep apnoea**
John C Bridgman, William F Heddle
- 94 **More students and less patients: the squeeze on medical teaching resources**
John D Paull
Helen Randall
- 94 **Intern choices for the first graduates of James Cook University**
Richard B Hays, Ian Wronski, Jan Veitch, Tamara McCloskey
- 94 **Problem-based learning: a dissemination success story?**
Robert G Batey
- 95 **Barriers to student access to patients in a group of teaching hospitals**
Graham D Tracy
- 96 **Use of prescribed medications in a South Australian community sample**
Rohan A Elliott
Robert D Goldney, Laura J Fisher

CORRECTIONS

- 67 **Is the Australian hospital system adequately prepared for terrorism?**
(*Med J Aust* 2005; 183: 567-570)
- 67 **The use of cusum analysis in the early detection and management of hospital bed occupancy crises.** (*Med J Aust* 2004; 183: 291-294)

BOOK REVIEW

- 75 **The last well person. How to stay well despite the health-care system**
reviewed by John M Dwyer

OBITUARY

- 80 **Carel Pieter de Ruyter van Gend** by David van Gend

IN THIS ISSUE

IN OTHER JOURNALS

Australasian Medical Publishing Company invites proposals for new books
All topics related to health and medicine will be considered

For further information, or to make a proposal, contact
Craig Bingham at AMPCo,
Locked Bag 3030, Strawberry Hills, NSW 2012
Tel: (02) 9562 6666 Email: cbingham@ampco.com.au

We can
help you
publish
your book!

Book Proposal Invite 

