

### IN HOT WATER

It wouldn't be an Australian summer without a walk on the beach, crunching stranded bluebottles underfoot, but encounters with these jellyfish in the water cause thousands of painful stings each year. Recently, the standard first aid measure of applying ice packs has been questioned amid a series of small studies suggesting that hot water might actually be better. In response, Loten et al conducted a randomised controlled trial on the beaches of Newcastle, NSW. We published the results, which indeed favour the warmer solution, as a rapid online publication to catch the end of the peak swimming season. The print version follows on *page 329*.

### BREATHE EASY

The Australian Lung Foundation recently updated its guidelines for the treatment of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPDX) in line with the most recent Cochrane reviews. For a summary of the new guidelines, complete with a helpful aide memoire, see Abramson et al (*page 342*).

### CONSUME WITH CARE

The first step towards preventing adverse events is understanding when and how they happen. This is why studies like that of Miller et al (*page 321*), which examines adverse drug events in Australian general practice, are very important. Having assessed the damage, say Roughead and Lexchin (*page 315*), we now need watertight systems for safer prescribing.

More than two years after its debut on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, the antipsychotic drug amisulpride seems to be well tolerated at therapeutic doses. The effects of overdose, however, take a while to emerge. On *page 354*, Isbister et al describe four patients who suffered severe cardiac toxicity in this situation.

### YOU ARE MY SUNSHINE

Summer is also a time when many of us are ambivalent about our relationship with the sun. On *page 338*, Samanek et al give an estimate of how much time in the sun will keep you vitamin D replete but out of the dermatologist's waiting room.



### REAL WORLD DIABETES

Few doctors would doubt the importance of optimising blood glucose levels to prevent the complications of type 2 diabetes, so it might be assumed that decisions to progress from diet to drugs, or drugs to insulin in the pursuit of euglycaemia would be simple and swift. But patients and their medical carers often have competing priorities and concerns. The Fremantle Diabetes Study (Davis et al, *page 325*) reveals that there are often long periods of hyperglycaemia before therapy is escalated.

Physicians who treat type 1 diabetes are beginning to realise that rigid regimens based on clinical ideals are rarely compatible with real life. Some European centres have been training patients with diabetes to vary their own insulin doses according to fluctuations in their diet (McIntyre, *page 317*). Several Australian centres are now following suit, with promising early results.

### DEBATING MEDICAL EDUCATION

In the next few years, Australia's medical workforce will undergo a marked transformation as a growing number of international graduates and graduates from both the established and the new medical schools join the current pool of doctors. How will we ensure that they are ready to practise, that their training needs are met, and that Australia has an adequate medical workforce? Luckily, some of our best minds are engaged in thinking these issues through, as evidenced in this issue by contributions from McGrath et al (*page 346*), Paltridge (*page 349*), and Dahlenburg et al (*page 319*). The recommendations are clear, placing the onus on governments to respond.

### TIMELY ADVICE

Most of us probably believe that the message that women's fertility decreases as they age has been very well propagated by the media and our politicians, but Bachrach (*page 358*) — who has experienced secondary infertility on the basis of menopause — believes doctors have a responsibility to reinforce the message and actively assist women to plan for the number of children they want. Fertility experts Chapman et al (*page 361*) agree that doctors have a role to play in helping women get what they want out of their reproductive lives.

### TWEAKING THE LOOK

Like all great fashion icons, the *MJA* changes its style in barely perceptible increments. In this issue, you will notice that we've substituted the rather flashy boxes of author details (previously found on the first page of most articles) for an understated but clearly visible section at the end of each article. We hope you'll agree that the result is both tailored and functional.

### ANOTHER TIME ... ANOTHER PLACE

The country needs fewer and better doctors; and ... the way to get them better is to produce fewer.

*Abraham Flexner, 1910*