

AMERICANISATION OF OUR MEDICAL SCHOOLS

During World War II, John Curtin, our then Prime Minister, faced with the imminent threat of a Japanese invasion of Australia, severed our traditional ties with Britain and looked to the United States for help. This defining decision began the Americanisation of our society, and, of late, it has influenced our medical schools.

In the US, there are 125 medical schools with an enrolment of 68280 students. All are graduate schools with uniform admission assessments, including interviews; a third of the schools are private. Each year, these schools graduate roughly one new MD per 183000 US citizens.

The *US News & World Report* ranking of medical schools, according to research or training performance, exemplifies the fierce competition that exists between the schools. It also lists the schools' fees. Finding information is not difficult, as each year, the *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)* publishes comprehensive data on US medical schools.

In Australia, we have 19 medical schools; 12 are established and the rest in development. Eight are graduate medical schools with admission assessments similar to those of their US counterparts. There are two private schools. Significantly, almost all of our schools cater for Australian or international fee-paying students — in some schools, they account for nearly one in three students.

However, ask questions about the categories of student enrolment, the number of fee-paying students, fee structures, the precise number of doctors actually graduating each year, and league tables of our best research or all-round medical schools, and answers are not readily available.

It seems that the Americanisation of our medical schools, as manifested in competition and collective transparency, still has a way to go. A *JAMA*-like report published annually in the *MJA* would be a good start.



Martin B Van Der Weyden

LETTERS

- The quality of national data on injuries requiring hospitalisation**
526 Kirsten McKenzie, Leith F Harding, Susan M Walker, James E Harrison, Emma L Enraght-Moony, Garry S Waller
- Guidelines for the management of acute coronary syndromes 2006**
526 Jayantha I Weeraratne
527 Philip Aylward, Constantine N Aroney
- Should clinical software be regulated?**
527 Karen L Fox
- Policy lags behind reality on antenatal HIV screening**
527 Len D Moaven

OBITUARY

- 511 **David Arthur Henderson** by Daniel RL Hart

CORRECTIONS

- 528 **An unusual cause of severe metabolic acidosis** (*Med J Aust* 2006; 185: 223-225)
- 528 **The repeating history of objections to the fortification of bread and alcohol: from iron filings to folic acid** (*Med J Aust* 2006; 185: 343)

474 IN THIS ISSUE

524 IN OTHER JOURNALS

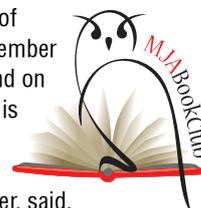
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G Wain, Director, Department of Gynaecological Oncology, Westmead Hospital, Sydney, NSW.

September MJA BookClub \$150 Gift Voucher Winner



Congratulations to Dr Mohammed Jaffer of Cabramatta, NSW. Dr Jaffer won the September *MJA BookClub \$150 Gift Voucher* to spend on any books from the MJA BookClub. "This is our second \$150 Gift Voucher promotion and has again proved very popular", Julie Chappell, the MJA BookClub Manager, said. "We would like to thank all the doctors, students and general health care professionals who purchased books from the September MJA BookClub and went into the draw to win the voucher. Because of the success of these promotions, we will be running them again in the new year."



Pictured above is Andrew Budiwarman, the MJA BookClub's Accounts Coordinator, drawing the September winner, Dr Mohammed Jaffer. Pictured right is Dr Younes Ismail of Condobolin, NSW, winner of the July *MJA BookClub \$150 Gift Voucher*. To see this month's MJA BookClub's great prize give-away, see page 514 and the inside back cover of this issue.

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