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**2014 Annual subscription** (+ GST):  
Individual: RRP A\$410.00 (new), A\$350.00 (renewal).  
Institutions: on application.

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## Highlights from our 1975 archives

Introducing a distinctive new shape for your overweight patient.

*The mid 70s saw many conventions and social norms reshaped, and the advertisements in the MJA certainly reflected that new freedom*



## Jargonistic governmentalese

Sir: In the Advertisement Supplement (MJA, 7 June 1975) there occurred the following sentence: "However, priority will be given to health manpower planning and task analysis research, research into health economics, regional health and health related planning and evaluation methodology development".

This is as blatant an example of jargonistic governmentalese as one can expect to encounter, and it is frightening to consider the future impact of [any commission] which expresses itself (it is not possible to think) in these terms.

It is no mean feat to construct from the English language a sentence of 27 words (26, if one excludes the superfluous "however") half of which are nouns. It is especially difficult to devise a sentence culminating in three nouns altogether comprising 14 syllables.

It is a pity that the sentence lacks lucidity, but this is not entirely surprising considering that these days one can scarcely avoid the impression that some official communications (so called)

have no intention of making their meaning clear.

It is difficult to believe that an author with such a facility in nouns could lack the knowledge of their adjectival forms, or of some of the littler words which can be used to link them meaningfully.

I doubt, Sir, if you would have permitted this arrogant manifestation of verbal affectation in the scientific or literary section of your Journal. Perhaps your responsibility could be further extended to protect us from such assaults in the advertisement section. Your educational role would contribute significantly towards the efficiency of the health services if it could be effective before we begin to receive instructions and directions couched in the same incomprehensible language.

Associate Professor Bryan Gandevia  
The Prince Henry Hospital  
Matraville, NSW  
19 July 1975

## "Marihuana"

Sir: One would imagine that if, as your comment suggests (Journal, 21 June 1975), the tetrahydrocannabinol constituents of marihuana possess the amazing abilities to prolong rejection time in organ transplants and to depress the rate of growth in tumours, then the medical profession should be roaring for immediate, intensive research into this substance and advocating for its urgent removal from the illicit drug category in which it has been placed by law enforcers.

I seem to recall also, a genetic damage claim in this anti-pot tirade. A few years

ago *The Lancet* ran a story about damage to chromosomes occurring in marihuana users, only to retract it a few weeks later when it was found that the "damage" done to the white blood cells was non-specific and occurred in response to any drug, or to none at all. If I recall correctly, the retraction was published towards the back of the journal and was printed in rather small type. However, perhaps my short-term memory fails me.

John Mackay  
Port Fairy, VIC  
5 August 1975