

EDITORIAL



Some light reading for the summer break this time.....

The amount of 'research' reported to the editor has reached an all-time low but we are unsure whether this reflects the fact that none is being done or that it just isn't being reported to us. However, there are clear signs of green shoots in the local health community, with medical students now providing a good deal of quality copy for the editorial team to prepare for publication. It's probably time for a 'student assistant editor' to keep up with the volume of submissions, several of which have been accepted for publication another day. Contact the editorial team if you feel a calling to this role!

We have devoted a fair amount of space to the issues facing the Human Resources department. Judging by the volume of email traffic from the HR offices, the working time directive (WTD) is clearly an important issue for them. A number of unanswered questions continue to trouble those

tasked with the implementation of the WTD. Is the idea of a fixed-time working week achievable for consultant staff? How will rotas be configured and what will happen to highly lucrative 'waiting list initiative' or private practice payments for work currently undertaken in 'spare time'. Can such extra activity be delivered while maintaining an on-call system? Will this activity have to be undertaken by consultants as part of their on-call duties in order to comply with WTD? Is there a risk that the amount of time (currently up to ten hours a week) that the Trust allows consultants for SPA (Supporting Professional Activity) or external activity will have to be reduced simply to get the work done.

Irrespective of hours worked, achievements in the health service reflect the effort that professionals have put in over a lifetime. We thank Dr Sally Pidd for her contribution on her life in the Bay area and are pleased to receive a tribute from one of her many admirers.

Andrew Severn
Editor

MBMJ Prize for best article by a junior doctor (2008)

Congratulations to Alexander Oldroyd. His article 'Hyperhidrosis after sympathectomy', published in Summer 2008, Volume 5 Number 8, wins the prize, which is worth £200 and is awarded annually.