

Unhappily, this issue of *The Journal* brings news of the death of Professor Ronald Haxton Girdwood, a previous President of the College. A short tribute appears in this issue, and a full obituary can be found on the College website. This issue of *The Journal* also brings a small innovation. Readers may have noticed that *The Journal* contains some blank sites. This results from starting each new paper on a new page which we believe gives each paper equal and proper recognition and gives *The Journal* its best appearance. We intend to use these spaces for short items related to medicine which will appear in a pale blue box. In this issue, *John Dallas* from our Library will tell you about Dr T Dover who promoted mercury as a medicine (pertinent to our article on mercury toxicity) and *Graeme McAlister*, our Head of Communications, will point to a 'book you should read'.

Our Editorial looks at research misconduct, a subject *The Journal* has considered in the past. Science has had a bad year in this regard in 2006. Our Editorial points out serious implications for Science, and suggests that preventive action goes beyond establishing organisations for detecting research fraud.

General Medicine starts with an important review on high altitude pulmonary oedema. *Sartori* and *Scherrer* have made important contributions in this condition, and, as tourists become ever more adventurous, all doctors need to be aware of this condition and how to avoid it. *Koh et al.* report a study in severe falciparum malaria. Patients developing acute renal failure had more haemolysis, greater multi-organ failure and a higher mortality. Treatment may reduce organ failure in those with high parasite counts. *Inverarity et al.* discuss the antibiotic treatment of MRSA vertebral discitis in a patient with chronic renal failure and serious hypersensitivity to the first line drug Vancomycin. Linezolid was used successfully. Most appropriate treatment in infectious diseases requires accurate identification of the infecting organism. *Demetriades et al.* report a patient with a brain abscess where an Actinomycosis organism turned out to be *Campylobacter gracilis*. Clinicians need to be aware that re-classification changes the names of organisms. Our short reviews begin with sudden death in young people. *Jennings* reviews inherited conditions causing sudden death, the need to investigate family members, the role of the autonomic nervous system in sudden death, and sudden death due to cardiac disease and drugs. *Wood et al.* then review the toxicity of different forms of mercury, and give guidance on mercury risks for dental amalgam, fish and vaccinations. Clinical Opinions cover three papers. *Lenton* concludes that autonomy cannot be accorded priority over all other ethical principles in medicine, *Williams* recommends Infliximab be considered in chronic active UC unresponsive to other therapy and in those facing emergency colectomy, and *Gordon* points to the need to remember vitamin D deficiency at all ages.

Medibytes summarise papers in several area of medical practice including a doctor's appearance! General Medicine ends with a paper by *Gordon* on political commentary in medical journals. He concludes that political commentary is appropriate if it adheres to the five criteria he enumerates.

Continuing Medical Education focuses primarily on Cardiology. *Hogg* and *Doherty* review the differentiation between acute coronary syndromes and emphasise re-vascularisation in patients at moderate to high risk. *Grubb* describes the indications for implantable cardioverter defibrillators and cardiac resynchronisation therapy devices. Patient selection has improved, and devices can enhance wellbeing, prevent hospitalisation and extend life. *Padfield* and *McMurray* then review the treatment of heart failure for which guidelines have been published in Europe and America in 2005. *Fitzpatrick* then concludes our CME articles with a Genetics paper on the presentation and investigation of inborn errors of metabolism in the newborn. Early diagnosis is essential, and tests can be directed on the basis of the presenting syndrome. Symposium Reports include three useful meetings. *Kane* and *Dennis* report on the need for prompt carotid endarterectomy in symptomatic patients with stenosis >70%, the need for further evidence for endovascular treatment, and screening of asymptomatic patients is not recommended. *Reynolds* and *Webb* report on self-blood glucose monitoring in type 2 diabetes mellitus. Those with stable glucose levels do not need self-blood glucose monitoring, and test should be tailored for each patient who does. *Drake* reported on obesity in childhood and adolescence. Type 2 diabetes and the metabolic syndrome are now appearing at a young age. Starting treatment as young as possible and family involvement were emphasised.

The **History** section begins a series of articles by *Lee* on the history of the Solanaceae, which includes important foods and dangerous poisons. This paper traces the potato from its origin in the Andes, to its current position as the world's fourth most important staple food. *Boyd* then recounts the story of a fierce struggle in nineteenth-century Edinburgh over homeopathy. *William Henderson*, the protagonist, was an able well-liked professor of pathology and a clinician, while his opponents included such famous names as *Simpson*, *Christison* and *Syme*. The outcome may have been inevitable but the intensity of the struggle was impressive. *Crawford* completes his history of the Mukden Medical College in Manchuria by tracing its development through the recognition of its medical degree by the University of Edinburgh in 1934 to its eventual incorporation into the Chinese Medical University in 1949. Finally, *Butler* recounts the history of nitrites/nitrates in the treatment of angina. Discovered in the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh in 1867, it is both an anti-anginal and an explosive. *Alfred Nobel*, the discoverer of its use in dynamite eventually needed it when he developed angina! Enjoy reading your *Journal*.