



French scientists urged to use mother tongue

Arguing that the mother tongue is the best tool for exercising mental ability, Dr. Michel Bergeron, a nephrologist at the Université de Montréal, has urged French-speaking scientists to study, write and publish in their own language. Bergeron, whose views were featured in a recent issue of the Montreal *Gazette*, is North American editor of the scholarly journal *Médecine-Sciences*.

Although he acknowledged that the international language of fundamental and highly specialized scientific research is English, Bergeron said there is ample room for publications in languages such as French and Spanish that are spoken around the world. "This is the level of synthesis," he said. "Publications at this level are essential if the implications of basic research are to reach the actual practitioners of science [including] family physicians. . . . And if this is to be done properly, the language — French for example — must be used fluently."

New health sciences program at Western

The University of Western Ontario will introduce a bachelor of health sciences program in September. The 3- or 4-year degree program will be offered by the new Faculty of Health

Sciences, a combination of the schools of kinesiology, nursing, communicative disorders and physical and occupational therapy. Students will gain a comprehensive understanding of the many disciplines relevant to health and wellness, opening opportunities for careers or further education in the health care field.

Lung cancer rates cloud 1997 statistics

Dramatic increases in lung cancer cases continue to cast a dark shadow over otherwise encouraging news that cancer mortality rates in Canadian women have declined an average of 12% since 1971. In releasing the *Canadian Cancer Statistics 1997* booklet, the National Cancer Institute of Canada blamed tobacco products for a 400% increase in lung cancer incidence and mortality rates among women. The age-standardized incidence rate for lung cancer for women (per 100 000) is expected to be 44.7 in 1997, with a mortality rate of 34.7.

On a more positive note, the death rate from breast cancer declined from 31.7 in 1985 to 28.8 in 1997. Among Canadian men, the overall cancer mortality rate declined slightly due to decreased mortality rates for lung, colorectal and other cancers. The incidence rate for prostate cancer has risen sharply since 1989, predominantly because of increased use of the prostate specific antigen test; mortal-

ity rates have also increased but at a much slower rate. *Canadian Cancer Statistics 1997* is available online at: www.cancer.ca/stats

Residency rules hurt obstetrics, says editor

Is there an obstetric crisis in Canada? Writing in the January issue of *Journal of the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada*, Editor-in-Chief Patrick Taylor said one-third of obstetricians will reach retirement age within 10 years and the specialty will face a crisis unless its thinning ranks can be filled with "eager young graduates from our residency programs." But "arbitrary and premature deadlines on students" are worsening the situation, he said.

Taylor lamented the "narrowness of the straitjackets" in which students find themselves. "No longer will the uncertain or the late bloomers be able to spend a number of years in general practice before discovering that the obstetrical side of their lives has become of overwhelming professional interest," he wrote. "Those that in the past came late to the specialty were often the best rounded and humane obstetricians."

Germ warfare in the playroom

It's almost impossible to keep toys and the germs they accumulate out of the mouths of very young children, so a leading manufacturer is waging war on the germs through antibacterial protection provided in its preschool toys. Hasbro's Playskool division is introducing a new toy line featuring antibacterial protection that suppresses the growth of a broad range of bacteria, mould, mildew and fungi. The protection, which does not wash or wear off, is already used in surface and flooring products in hospitals, laboratories, restaurants and food-processing sites.

CMA marks 130th anniversary

Physicians will soon notice the colourful 130th anniversary logo appearing on material arriving from the CMA. Created by CMA Publications graphic designer Raymond Rocan, the logo will remind members that the CMA has been serving the interests



of physicians in Canada since Oct. 9, 1867 — the year Canada was born. A number of activities are being planned to call attention to the anniversary and the CMA's stature as the premier and senior medical association in the country.