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Marking the 100th anniversary of the discovery of radium with a tribute to research pioneer Marie Curie, Arty Coppes-Zantinga and Max Coppes describe the fingers burned, marrows destroyed and lives lost in the quest to study and improve radiology, radiation therapy and radiation protection measures (page 1389). The debt we owe to these early scientific martyrs is clear when we consider the tremendous benefits that radiation treatment can provide to patients suffering from various types of cancer. Continuing our Clinical Basics series on prostate cancer, Pdraig Warde and associates attempt to define the role of radiation in the treatment of localized disease, describing modalities and potential complications (page 1381).

Even when effective treatment is available, we are left with the perennial question: Is prostate cancer screening justified? Maurice McGregor and colleagues estimate that of every 100 men with screen-detected prostate cancer, only 16 would have their lives extended by surgery; the remaining 84 would not die of their cancer before the age of 85 (page 1368). Neill Iscoe highlights some of the important assumptions underlying such estimates of the magnitude of over-detection, arguing that a randomized clinical trial is desperately needed (page 1375). He notes that even when the results of such a trial become available, the most difficult questions surrounding screening for prostate cancer and other diseases will remain to be answered: What level of over-detection is acceptable, and how much benefit to how many is worthwhile?

Although some diseases may be overdetected by screening, certain in-

dividuals continue to be “underdetected” by sampling methods for clinical trials. Catherine Hankins and colleagues found that about one-quarter of the 413 HIV-positive women in the Canadian Women’s HIV Study have participated in AIDS drug trials (page 1359). Although this overall participation rate is high, injection drug users, non-white women, women who did not complete high school and women not receiving anti-retroviral therapy are underrepresented. Reminding us that fit, young men are not the only group who become ill and receive therapy, Paula Rochon and associates urge researchers to recruit individuals from marginalized groups into clinical trials in order to enhance the generalizability of study results and improve health outcomes in all segments of the population (page 1373).

As health information networks continue to grow and to attract widespread use, another issue in the ethics of research has emerged. Looking within and beyond the legislation, Donald Willison describes the challenge of balancing the need for high-quality health care research with the patient’s right to privacy (page 1378).

Finally, fish-lovers beware: that succulent barracuda imported from the Caribbean may leave your stomach aching, your skin itching and your gums tingling. In our Public Health column we describe the fascinating biology and strange symptomatology of ciguatera fish poisoning (page 1394). The symptoms are even stranger in Alan Lupin’s amusing account of an academic run-in, an experiment gone wrong and an unfortunate bout of the “Prussian blues” (page 1392). ☺