

Research

This year's Holiday Review starts with some straight-up research in unexpected areas.

Should hypertensive patients be warned against the après-ski pleasures of the hot tub? Tae Won Shin and colleagues, examining the basis for safety concerns, found in a controlled trial that patients with treated hypertension experienced the same fall in blood pressure as nonhypertensive subjects after soaking in a hot tub for 10 minutes (page 1265).



People who overdo their holiday cheer may be interested in the results of a randomized controlled trial comparing artichoke extract and placebo for the prevention of alcohol-induced hangover. Max Pittler and colleagues found that, despite product claims, participants paid equally for their excesses (page 1269).

Dennis Scolnik and colleagues address a seemingly light topic with potentially serious applications by surveying children and their caregivers about the words they use to refer to "private" body parts and functions. Their lexicon may help to clear up confusion in clinical assessments and may help to facilitate communication in cases of suspected abuse (page 1275).

Reflecting on SARS

As 2003 comes to a close, we consider the impact of one of the year's most significant medical events: the SARS outbreak. Mark Cheung, an internist in Toronto, recounts his experience as a patient on a SARS ward (page 1284). Michelle Greiver provides a glimpse into life in quarantine, with excerpts from a diary she kept during 9 days in isolation (page 1283). Ronald Ruskin gives a fictional view of the implications of the "new normal" of outbreak control on everyday physician-patient interaction (page 1286).

Home and abroad, then and now

A Holiday Review tradition is to reflect on the practice of medicine out of our accustomed bounds. Geoff Ibbotson's account from Nepal (page 1301) and Joseph Vipond's reminiscence from Baffin Island (page 1305) depict challenges in primary care in settings worlds apart and yet similarly challenging. Lara

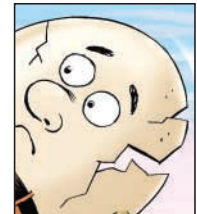


Hazelton (page 1317) and Kevin Pottie (page 1313) reconsider their professional role in places as close to home as the schoolyard and the parish church. Ken Obenson describes how cultural

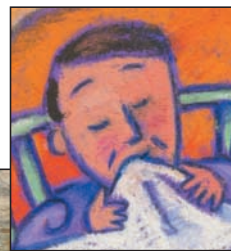
context redefined his work as a pathologist in Jamaica (page 1309). Other contributors offer historical notes on medicine's changing character. For example, Peter Wilton recounts the ignominious response of medical staff at a Montréal hospital to the appointment of a Jewish physician as senior intern in 1934 (page 1329), while Ken Flegel looks back on the manners and methods of ward rounds in days of less haste and more art (page 1319).

Lighter fare

Our Holiday Review would be incomplete without a little irreverence. Sarah Giles and Sarah Shea tap an unexplored literature of traumatic injury by pondering the catastrophes described in nursery rhymes



(page 1294). Farrah Mateen does lunch in a Paris hospital cafeteria where *outré* murals cover the walls and tablecloths serve as napkins (page 1311). David Keegan and Susan Bannister offer new data on making a success of poster presentations (page 1291). For readers running



late with their holiday shopping, Sandeep Aggarwal and friends' gift ideas are sure to please the physician who has everything (page 1326).