TIME FOR POETRY

In this month’s issue the Journal breaks new ground by breaking into verse. For the next few months we will be carrying poems on environmental health themes from the Liverpool poet, Levi Tafari. Levi can be seen performing these poems, in the company of local children, by logging on to the Journal web site (http://www.jech.com/misc/poems.shtml). We hope that this innovation will encourage other contributions in a more cultural vein.

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In an issue with more than the usual number of papers in the Policy and Practice section, we also carry two important editorials: one from one of the fathers of modern urban health, Len Duhl, reflecting on the paradigms underpinning Healthy Cities; another from Giovanni Rezza reflecting on whether avian flu will inevitably lead to a human pandemic. He concludes that although another influenza pandemic in humans is inevitable, we cannot predict when it will occur, but must do everything we can to avert the threat and improve our responsiveness.

See pages 806, 807

Policy and Practice includes two papers from a pre-eminent group of social scientists, which report on the outcome of a workshop that set out to explore the evidence base for public health policy on inequalities. Also:

- Brewer and Heymann challenge the dominance of the DOTS approach to tuberculosis control;
- We report a qualitative study from the Gabon on mothers’ reactions to fever and their natural and supernatural interpretations;
- A Swiss group provides more evidence on the impact of air particles on public health;
- Morrison et al report that traffic calming has benefits that go beyond the immediate impact on slowing vehicular traffic;
- Surprise, surprise… Households with firearms that are locked or unloaded are less likely to be associated with firearms suicides at home. This might seem blindingly obvious, but we might ask who is blind in this debate about firearms;
- We carry a short report on the utility of a computer tailored smoking cessation programme;
- And from New Zealand we report findings that are consistent with other evidence that antibiotic use early in life may increase the risk of asthma.

See pages 811, 817, 822, 826, 831, 837, 841, 849, 852

In Continuing Professional Education we publish the first part of a Glossary of Health Inequalities that should be of value to researchers, and in a smaller than usual number of research reports we have findings on socioeconomic inequalities in mobility decline among sufferers of chronic diseases; psychosocial factors and work related sickness absence among different categories of employees (permanent or non-permanent); and we report the predictors of outcome in chronic fatigue syndrome from the Maastricht cohort study.

See pages 858, 862, 870, 877

Finally, several contributions on chlamydia this month in Hygieia.

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