

# bmj.com news roundup

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## Junior doctor charged with manslaughter after medical error

A hospital doctor has been charged with manslaughter over the death of a teenager who was wrongly given a spinal injection of a cytotoxic drug meant for intravenous use only.

Feda Mulhem, 35, from Leicester, is accused of the unlawful killing of Wayne Jowett, 18, who died at the Queen's Medical Centre in Nottingham in February last year after vincristine was injected into his spine.

A police spokeswoman said Dr Mulhem was being charged "as a result of advice from the Crown Prosecution Service." The case was the 14th such blunder since 1985 involving vincristine, 11 of them fatal.

The teenager, who had been given a diagnosis of leukaemia at the age of 16, was in remission at the time and was expected to make a full recovery. Dr Mulhem, who was only three days into his first specialist registrar appointment, supervised the injection, which was given by a junior doctor with only five weeks' experience on the ward.

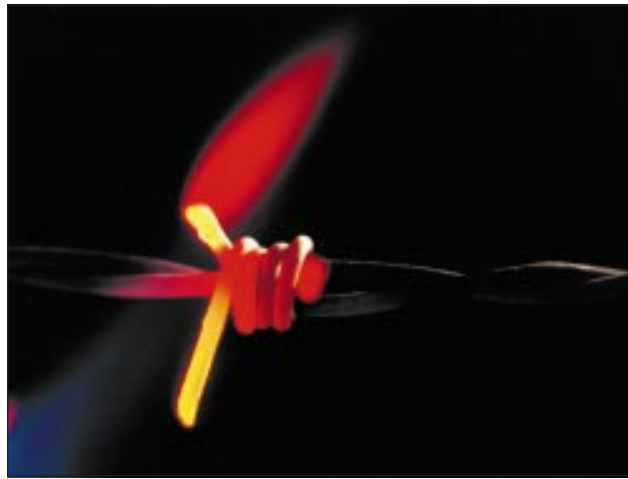
The hospital admitted liability for the error and paid an undisclosed amount in compensation to the patient's parents. Clare Dyer *legal correspondent, BMJ*

## Revalidation will need good appraisal summaries

The General Medical Council this week told doctors what type of evidence they would need for their appraisals to ensure that the documentation was sufficient for revalidation.

The council's appraisal implementation group found that appraisal folders that contained a comprehensive summary document were often good enough for revalidation, without reference to the underpinning evidence.

But most summaries in the



## Exhibition aids dialogue between doctors and patients with chronic pain

An art exhibition entitled "Perceptions of Pain" opened this week at the Royal College of Physicians, London, featuring photographs created by artist Deborah Padfield, after she spoke to patients with chronic pain from St Thomas's Hospital. *Red Hot Wire* (above) was created in collaboration with patient Linda Sinfield.

The exhibition, funded by the Guy's and St Thomas's charitable foundation, continues until 15 October.

Annabel Ferriman *BMJ*

council's pilot project did not present the evidence clearly enough for such a recommendation to be made.

The project was the second stage of a revalidation piloting exercise that examined the link between appraisal and revalidation.

The pilot study considered folders from 55 volunteers (22 general practitioners, 25 hospital doctors, and eight from other backgrounds) from trusts and organisations that were piloting their appraisal processes or had already introduced them. Mirza Muminovic *BMJ*

The report and examples of appraisal documentation will be posted at [www.revalidationuk.info](http://www.revalidationuk.info)

## European Court adviser rules against tobacco companies

The European Union is on course to introduce tougher restrictions on the manufacture,

presentation, and sale of cigarettes after two of the world's largest tobacco companies recently had a major legal setback in their attempt to overturn the new rules.

These rules will require cigarette manufacturers to set aside 30% of the front of a packet for clear health messages such as "Smoking kills." They will also cut the maximum permitted tar levels from 12 mg to 10 mg and outlaw the use of terms such as "low tar," "ultra light," and "mild."

The strict controls would apply to cigarettes both sold in and exported from the European Union.

Soon after EU governments and the European parliament adopted the measures in June last year, British American Tobacco (Investments) and Imperial Tobacco challenged their legality before London's High Court. They argued that the European Union had overstepped its powers.

The case was referred to the European Union's highest legal authority, the European Court of Justice in Luxembourg. After considering the respective argu-

ments, Leendert Geelhoed, one of the senior advocates general who advises the judges, has rejected the companies' complaints and ruled that the legislation is valid.

The advocate general also supported the legislation's right to apply the same restrictions to cigarettes exported from the union. The European Commission has welcomed the advocate general's opinion. But the final decision now rests with the full court, which usually, but not always, follows the advice it has been given.

Rory Watson *Brussels*

## Scottish NHS signs £4m deal with private sector

The National Health Service in Scotland has concluded its biggest deal of recent years with private hospitals to speed up the treatment of people waiting for hip and knee surgery.

It has provisionally booked all the spare capacity for orthopaedic surgery in Scotland's private hospitals over the next six months, at a cost of £4m (\$6.2m; €6.4m). The money will be used to treat about 500 patients who have been waiting up to a year for hip or knee replacement surgery.

The decision to treat NHS patients in private hospitals comes just two weeks after the latest waiting list figures for Scotland showed an increase in the number of people waiting for treatment from 71 962 in March to 79 949 at the end of June.

Bryan Christie *Edinburgh*

## Gynaecologist accused of delegating inappropriately

An eminent gynaecologist was before the General Medical Council this week accused of delegating surgery to a junior who lacked the competence to perform the procedure.

Professor Stuart Campbell is accused of serious professional misconduct in his handling of