

persuasion. One trusts that intolerant physicians who cannot abide anyone whose opinion differs from their own are rare and becoming rarer in the medical profession.

To rephrase Harvie's concluding thought: "When religious principles come up against medical fanaticism the honest patient has no choice but to seek out physicians who respect the conscience of others."

Physicians who respect the conscience of their patients honour their profession.

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Hazard of yawning

Our report of a case of jaw subluxation with yawning (*Can Med Assoc J* 1990; 142: 15) generated reminiscences and some wit from Drs. Richard S. Lurie and Ellen and Leonard Warner (*ibid*: 533). Data on this phenomenon remain anecdotal, and prevalence studies are lacking. Accordingly, we undertook a survey at Douglas Hospital, Verdun, Que.

Questionnaires were mailed to the 86 active members of the Council of Physicians, Dentists and Pharmacists of the hospital. The ages of the members ranged from 29 to 81 years, and the mean age was 51.2 years. Seventy-two replies (an 84% response rate), 54 from men and 18 from women, were received. In the calculation of percentages nonresponders were considered to be free of mandibular difficulties (i.e., $n = 86$).

Jaw subluxation was reported by five men and one woman during a total of 19 episodes. For one man a bicycle accident at the age of 21 had resulted in the only incident of jaw subluxation experienced. Another man also had

a single episode, the unwelcome result of a passionate kiss at the age of 26. An anterior subluxation of the right temporomandibular joint, presumed to be the local manifestation of ankylosing spondylitis (temporomandibulitis), had occurred more than a year earlier in a 41-year-old man.

The remaining three cases of jaw subluxation were of particular interest as they occurred predominantly or selectively in association with yawning. A 65-year-old man who had suffered at least 10 such events over the previous 12 years attributed most subluxations to yawning and a few to dental procedures. Three episodes of jaw subluxation solely associated with yawns and occurring between the ages of 42 and 53 were reported by a 56-year-old man. The woman had experienced three episodes of jaw subluxation during yawning between the ages of 15 and 45.

The high prevalence of jaw subluxation (7%) was surprising. The prevalence of subluxation associated with yawning was 3.5%, which suggests that naturally occurring jaw subluxation may represent a more common phenomenon than heretofore suspected.

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Spot the deliberate mistake

As an old pediatrician and a new farmer I was amazed by the photograph on the cover of the Oct. 1, 1991, issue of *CMAJ*. At first glance it appears to be an idyllic portrayal of country life, as father and son head off to the fields together on a tractor.

To the left of the photo we are informed that one topic in this issue of the journal is "Health and safety risks in agriculture."

Everyone at *CMAJ* must have been asleep, from François Proulx, who provided the photo (however artistic it may be), to the editor-in-chief. No one seems to have appreciated that riding on the fender of a tractor, particularly one that is pulling an implement (as the photo suggests), is probably one of the most common practices leading to mishap.

The photo is a beautiful illustration of an accident waiting to happen.

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[Exactly! — Ed.]

Through a glass darkly

We should not conclude, as does Dr. William C. Gibson in his editorial (*Can Med Assoc J* 1991; 145: 625-627), that the examination board of the London College of Physicians was particularly hard on William Harvey or that the candidate was so incompetent that he had to take the examination three times.

All foreign graduates had to present themselves three times to be questioned on the "rudiments of physic" (i.e., physiology and anatomy) in the first examination, on the "pathologic part of physic" (i.e., the causes and symptoms of disease) in the second and on the treatment of disease in the third. Harvey had already received "tacit permission to practise" from the board after his first examination, on May 4, 1603, and he passed the second and third on Apr. 2 and May 11, 1604. On Oct. 5, 1604, he took the oath as *licentiatus*, which gave him official