

laboratory safety officer that 30 phials of plague bacteria from a project in Tanzania were missing. A terrorism alert followed, drawing national attention. FBI agents arrested him. He said the phials were missing because he had inadvertently destroyed them (*BMJ* 2003;327:699). Later he changed his mind and said he didn't know what had happened to them.

In December Dr Butler was convicted of some of the charges but acquitted of the most serious ones. However, he was convicted of defrauding Texas Tech University in connection with drug trials for pharmaceutical companies (*BMJ* 2003;327:1307).

District Judge Sam Cummings, known as "Maximum Sam" for his tough sentences, sentenced him to two years, which is due to begin on 14 April.

Janice Hopkins Tanne *New York*

The journal *Science* has an online log of the trial at <http://scienew.org/sciencemag.org/feature/data/butlertrialprevious.shtml>

## Drug resistant tuberculosis soars in eastern Europe

Multidrug resistant tuberculosis in parts of eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union is 10 times as common as in most parts of the world, a new report from the World Health Organization said this week.

The report, which is WHO's third on drug resistant tuberculosis, contains new data obtained from the WHO/IUATLD (International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease) Global Project on Anti-Tuberculosis Drug Resistance Surveillance.

Speaking at the report's launch in London this week, Dr Paul Nunn, coordinator of tuberculosis, HIV, and drug resistance at the Stop TB department of WHO, said: "We see about nine million cases worldwide every year and about two million deaths."

He said: "This report... covers 77 geographic settings, most of which are countries—except in certain instances like China,

where several settings are in one country. Thirty nine of the settings are new, and 67 657 cases were tested.

"It was found that multidrug resistance in parts of eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union was 10 times what it was in the rest of the world, with rates as high as 14% in new patients."

Chibuzo Odigwe *BMJ*

Details of the report, *Anti-tuberculosis Drug Resistance in the World, Report No 3*, can be obtained from the World Health Organization ([www.who.int](http://www.who.int)).

## BMA is frustrated by pay award for doctors on old contract

The BMA has greeted the new pay awards for doctors who stay on their existing contracts rather than choose the new contracts with a sense of frustration and disappointment, claiming the awards will do nothing to improve morale or the problems of recruitment and retention that the profession faces.

The above inflation increases made by the Doctors and Dentists Review Body (DDRB) range from 2.5% for hospital doctors to 2.7% for junior doctors. However, the new contracts incorporate an increase of 3.225% for 2004-5.

The pay awards take the starting salary for consultants who are not on the new contract to £55 699 (\$100 300; €81 800), rising to a maximum of £72 483 without any additional discretionary pay increases. Salaries for house officers rise to £19 703 for those starting out to a maximum of £34 477 for a senior house officer in the highest band.

The new contract for hospital consultants comes into effect on 1 April this year, and it is estimated that between 70% and 80% of consultants will sign up to it.

GPs who opt for a salary rather than continue on a non-salaried contractual basis can expect to earn between £47 710 and £72 478 from April, a rise of less than 3.225%.

Zosia Kmietowicz *London*

## Mother accused of murder after refusing caesarean section

Charles Marwick *Washington*

A woman in Salt Lake City, Utah, has been charged with murder after the death of one of her near term twins—the result, say prosecutors, of her refusal to have a medically advised caesarean section. The infants, one female and the other male, were delivered on 13 January. The male baby was stillborn but the female survives.

The woman, Melissa Ann Rowland, aged 28, was charged with a single count of first degree criminal homicide. She is currently in jail in lieu of \$250 000 (£139 000; €204 000) bond. If convicted, Ms Rowland could be sentenced to five years in prison.

"She knew that refusing medical treatment would very likely cause death," said Kent Morgan, a spokesman for Salt Lake district attorney Davis Yocum, in a statement.

Court documents say that Ms Rowland was informed "numerous times" between 25 December and 9 January that her unborn twins would die if she did not get immediate medical treatment. Prosecutors maintain that Ms Rowland was negligent in ignoring repeated warnings of the need for a caesarean section because of the deteriorating condition of the fetuses. Initially, press reports said that Ms Rowland had refused the caesarean on the grounds that it would leave her with a scar, a charge she denies, according to a report by a

Salt Lake City television station.

The indictment follows a decision by the Utah Supreme Court in January that held that unborn children at all stages of development are covered under the state's criminal homicide statute. An exception is made for abortions.

Ms Rowland has a history of inflicting child abuse. Four years ago, according to a report in the *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*, she was sentenced to five years' probation by a Pennsylvania court for recklessly endangering the welfare of her daughter, a child from an earlier pregnancy.

Ms Rowland has two other children, who are reported to be living with their grandparents in Virginia. Both were born by caesarean section. She is either divorced or separated from her husband, according to Ms Rowland's lawyer, Michael Sikora, quoted in an Associated Press dispatch. Mr Sikora added that Ms Rowland had a history of mental illness and had been treated in a psychiatric hospital.

Previous charges against pregnant women for abusing their fetuses have related to substance misuse of alcohol and drugs. Ms Rowland's is the first case in Utah to be based on a woman's decision to refuse a caesarean section, although there have been cases in other states involving such operations. □



Melissa Ann Rowland, with the public defender, Mark Helm, appears in court from jail via closed circuit television. Judge Sandra Peuler is seen in the lower right hand corner