

## A view from the Web

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In a multispecialty journal such as the *JRSM*, an article on dysfibrinogenaemia must be comprehensible to dermatologists, an article on oncogenes to obstetricians, an article on psittacosis to psychiatrists. One function of the editor is to be a lowest common denominator for the readers, equipped with core medical knowledge but unversed in the techniques and jargons of specialties. If I fail to grasp the point, I assume that others outside the specialty will have the same difficulty.

Opinions might differ on the need for psychiatrists to know about psittacosis, but there is no doubt that, in coming years, all of us must become proficient in securing medical information from electronic sources, especially the Internet. Alas, the mechanics of the process can be tedious and deeply frustrating. Few of us have the time, the skills, or the inclination to surf the Internet; what we need is a small number of entry points that lead us to information of high quality.

As a complete novice I was greatly helped by Robert Kiley's book *Medical Information on the Internet* (Churchill Livingstone, 1996); and the *JRSM* has commissioned Mr Kiley, a health sciences librarian, to write a monthly series addressing in simple terms the needs of clinicians and other medical workers. The first appears on p488. It is jargon-

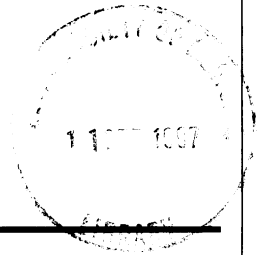
free; and, in my role of lowest common denominator, I have tested the suggestions and found them good.

**Robin Fox**

Editor, *JRSM*

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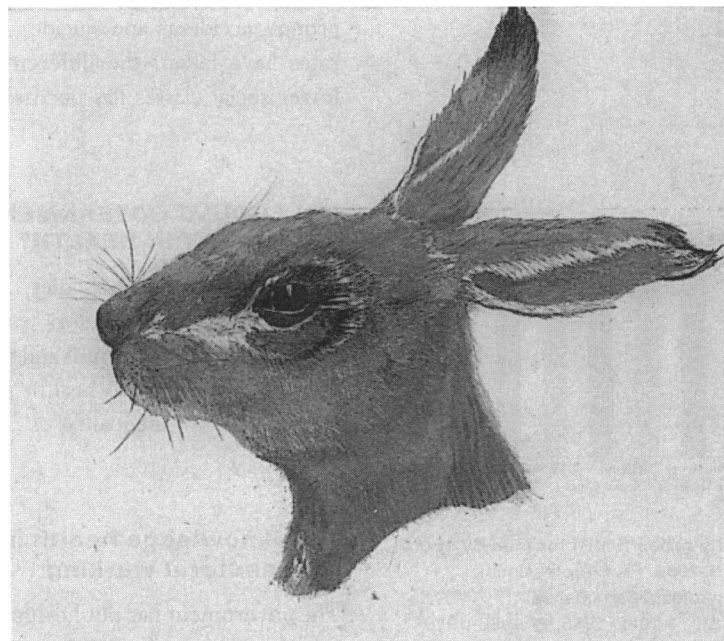
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This *Journal* contains many areas of pure white which tree-lovers find an offensive waste of paper. Why not, I am asked, at least fill the spaces with something instructive or decorative? For offprint purposes, the spaces that follow full articles must usually be kept clear; but opportunities do arise on other pages. Let us try the experiment. Would readers please send me items that might serve this purpose. The material should have some medical relevance, and a line or two of explanation would be helpful. Size should not be critical, so that we can reduce when necessary; colour, unfortunately, is not an option. The etching reproduced below is the work of Dr Irvine Loudon, medical historian and former general practitioner, who also features in the book review columns this month.

**Robin Fox**

Editor, *JRSM*



Hare, by Irvine Loudon