

In brief

Israeli doctors end protests: Three months of walkouts and mass resignations by trainee doctors in Israel dissatisfied with a nine year labour deal brokered by the Israel Medical Association in August ended on 8 December after external mediators intervened. Trainees won bonuses, higher pay, a commitment to only six late night and weekend shifts a month, and a contract review in 2015. In turn they agreed that hospital doctors would clock in and out to show they were not moonlighting during regular hours.

Asking about organ donation should be routine in end of life care: Organ donation should be considered as a usual part of care planning at the end of life, with every hospital having a policy and protocol for identifying potential organ donors and managing the consent process, says the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence in new guidance. Around 10 000 people in the UK are on waiting lists for a transplant, and about 1000 die each year waiting for an organ.

MHRA warns over super-strength menopause remedy: The UK Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency is warning consumers that “natural” does not always mean safe after it asked the manufacturer of FSC Black Cohosh 1000 mg capsules to remove it from the market because it did not have the appropriate authorisation and contains 50 times the approved dose for menopausal complaints. Since 1998 the agency has received 50 reports of suspected adverse reactions associated with various unlicensed black cohosh products, including jaundice, liver problems, and hepatitis.

Attacks on hospitals during conflict are war crimes: Attacks on medical workers, patients, and health facilities during conflicts are war crimes that contravene the Geneva conventions, says the International Health Protection Initiative (www.ihpi.org), which has established a website to register such incidents in confidence.

Atlas highlights variations in care: Rates of prescribing of antedementia drugs vary 25-fold across England, shows the NHS

Atlas of Variation (www.rightcare.nhs.uk/index.php/atlas/atlas-of-variation-2011), which the Department of Health has published to highlight the amount that each primary care trust spends on clinical services and how this relates to patients' health outcomes. The atlas's 71 maps will help commissioners learn from one another, says the department.

Keogh appointed to NHS commissioning authority: Bruce Keogh has been appointed as designate national medical director of the new NHS Commissioning Board. Professor Keogh will split his time between his role as medical director of the NHS and his new role on the NHS Commissioning Board authority. Subject to passage of the Health and Social Care Bill, the NHS Commissioning Board will be invited to confirm the appointment once it is fully established next year.

Parents of babies in neonatal care get poor information: A fifth (22%) of parents whose baby was treated in neonatal or special care units said that no member of staff talked to them about their baby's condition and treatment after the birth, shows a survey carried out by Picker Institute Europe. Only 40% said that they “definitely got enough” written information to help them understand their baby's condition or treatment, and 44% said that staff “sometimes” or “often” gave them conflicting information.

Social media platform aims to humanise healthcare in Spain: A new platform aimed at “humanising” healthcare, called Mírame, Diferenciate (Look at Me, Make a Difference), has been launched in Spain (<http://diferenciate.org>). It uses social media to encourage doctors to consider the details of the care they provide, such as looking at a patient during the consultation rather than at the computer screen.

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