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# nationalnews

## IN BRIEF

### CYBERCHONDRIA



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MICROSOFT has been inspired by 'cyberchondria' - the practice of looking up your symptoms on a search engine and convincing yourself that you have the dreadful disease that pops up first - in order to develop a search engine that answers queries in a more

### GAMBLING CLINIC



SAMI ABU WARDEH  
IMPERIAL  
GUEST WRITER

THE first NHS Gambling Clinic has been set up in Soho, initially on a one year trial basis. It is partially funded by the gambling industry through contributions to the Responsibility in Gambling Trust.

### NEEDLESTICKS



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A GREATER proportion of doctors are being exposed to blood-borne viruses than nurses, according to a report by the Health Protection Authority. A recent study by the Royal College of Nursing found that nearly half of nurses have had a needlestick injury at some point in their career. Many of these incidents could have been prevented.

## DOCTORS TO BLAME FOR BABY P CASE?



LAURA JAMES  
SUB-EDITOR

Baby P, the beautiful blue-eyed child, endured 17 months of brutal abuse, resulting in his death. His mother, her boyfriend and their lodger have been convicted but there is concern that the abuse was not recognised and stopped sooner. Blame has been distributed amongst many, but how much were doctors held responsible?

The last doctor to see Baby P, Dr. Sabah Al Zayyat, is now suspended from work. She missed that his back and two of his ribs were broken, because she thought he was too miserable for a full examination. However, nineteen different doctors and health care workers had already seen him after the abuse began, which lead to his tragic death in August 2007.

Unease began in December 2006 when Dr. Jerome Kaine Ilkweke,

the child's GP, referred Baby P onto Whittington hospital. He put in a letter to paediatricians:

"He presents with an unexplained haematoma over the front of the skull. Bruises right shoulder, right breast and sternum and two-inch frontal haematoma with bluish colouration on the front of the nose. Full alert."

At the Whittington Hospital, Dr. Heather Mackinnon was so troubled by what she saw that she contacted Haringey

social services. They in turn contacted the Metropolitan Police. Police investigations were carried



Haringey Council

out and three other doctors examined him. All agreed there were signs of physical abuse.

However, despite the comments, no action was taken. The Crown Prosecution Service said that

there was not enough evidence for a conviction. And solicitors at Haringey Council advised that the case did not pass the required legal threshold to take him into care.

Had they have known the full details, would they have come to such a decision? Liaison between doctors and social services appears to be frail. Perhaps if communication between authorities had been stronger, the distress that Baby P was experiencing could have been

## WHAT ABOUT THE E-BUG?



JEMMA THEIVENDRAN  
INTERNATIONAL  
NEWS EDITOR

SCHOOL pupils are being taught about infection in the fight against superbugs.

The series of interactive games and planned lessons aim to highlight the mechanisms of spread of infection and the use of antibiotics.

The Health Protection Agency's 'e-bug' teaching resource will be available across Europe from 2009, being launched to coincide with the first European Antibiotic Awareness Day.

Across EU states, various advertising campaigns will begin and the Department of Health will relaunch 'Antibiotics! Do You Need Them?' which was originally seen in February 2008.

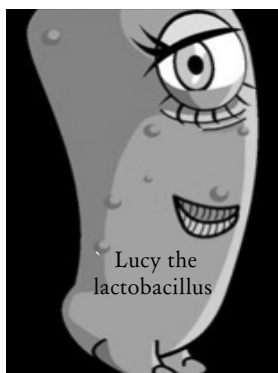
The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control will release statistics of how each EU state is tackling antibiotic-re-

level that involves hopping on a hover board and photographing them with a camera phone.

Dr Cliodna McNulty, who led the development of e-Bug, states: "Public campaigns so far have been aimed at adults...but we need to educate our future generations of adults and parents about the benefits of antibiotics and the problems that can arise through their misuse."

Dr Jim Kennedy, prescribing spokesman for the Royal College of GPs, agrees

"It is great that children will be taught about this... the over-use of antibiotics plays a huge role in these infections and doctors are still put under pressure to prescribe these drugs when they are not necessary."



sistant infections. In the UK, rates of MRSA are falling but concerns have been voiced over other drug-resistant bacteria.

E-bug has been developed for both primary and secondary school pupils - the online game includes quizzes on aspects of microbes and a

You can play online! [www.e-bug.eu](http://www.e-bug.eu)

## EDUCATION - AND DEBT, DEBT, DEBT.



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A CHANGE in criteria for students entitled to financial support has been criticized sharply by the British Medical Association. Whilst there is no specific attack on medical students, they will be particularly hard hit due to their lengthy course.

John Denham, the Universities' Secretary, announced the changes in a written Parliamentary answer, which concentrated on those in income brackets that would receive higher levels of funding than.

Tim Crocker-Buque, Chairman of the BMA's Medical Student Committee, reacted to the news with a statement pointing

out that medical students already graduate with around £20000 of debt. He is worried that the change in the support structure will deter talented, able students from embarking upon medical training - the exact opposite of the stated purpose.

With the recent changes in pay structure and accommodation that have left many junior doctors feeling out of pocket, it is likely that debt will be a greater deterrent to students than ever before. At a time when there is such an emphasis on recruitment regardless of background, this seems like a potentially dangerous return to the era of medical education being the preserve of those whose families could afford it.



### ARMFUL HAIR-SPRAY

SCIENTISTS at Imperial College have found that mothers who come into contact with hairspray in the first trimester of pregnancy are more likely to have boys with congenital abnormalities. Hypospadias, where the urethral meatus is on the underside of the penis, is thought to be related to exposure to phthalates.

### PRIZE-WINNING MARROW

KCL Marrow, a society that supports the Anthony Nolan Trust, has won the prestigious ANT Award for 2007/8. The society raised over £4000 and recruited 300 people onto the bone marrow register maintained by the charity, which helps to match donors with patients who need bone marrow transplants.

### CASH FOR CANCER CENTRE

UNIVERSITY College London Hospitals NHS Trust has been given the go-ahead for a £110million cancer centre to be based in Huntley Street. Similar initiatives in the USA are thought to be responsible for the better survival of cancer patients there. The centre aims to lead the way in Europe.

### SEX MESSAGE

BARTS and The London have introduced a new scheme in two sexual health clinics, whereby patients are texted the results of STI tests. Most people should receive their results in 72 hours. Serious findings, such as testing HIV positive, would not be texted - the patient would be asked to make an appointment.

### GUARDIAN OF DIVERSITY

SGUL has won a Guardian Public Service award for widening participation. The adjusted admission criteria, with lower grade offers for pupils at poorly-performing schools, has negligible impact on exam results, and has helped increase the proportion of state school and black and minority ethnic students.