

EDITORIAL

Things change, often without us being aware. Clinical practice, diagnostic techniques, medical devices and medical law are in a constant state of flux. In the perfect world of evidence-based medicine, most (if not all) change would result from research and development activity directed towards the improvement of care. This supposes, of course, that R&D are valued by NHS staff who are themselves skilled in research techniques and are connected to academic institutions. A moment's reflection will show that the few skilled, productive, NHS researchers in Morecambe Bay are vastly outnumbered by those who take no part at all.

Why is this? In part, it's because research skills were not a required part of our learning in the past. The acquisition of

professional skills was based more on a curriculum than self-directed enquiry. Nowadays, medical students are taught how to obtain information, evaluate evidence, generate research projects and network with professionals outside the NHS, notably the universities.

It's not too late to learn, as Simon Wetherell and Mike Wong show on page 351. They both say it's worth the effort. And even if you don't feel able to learn research techniques for yourself, see if you can help Sara Morris to recruit subjects for her study. The invitation is on page 358.

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Editor

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