

EDITORIAL

The article by Yashwant Shukla in this edition of the MBMJ is timely. He reports the results of a survey carried out into suicide attempts at HMYOI Lancaster Farms and then gives a comprehensive account about the monitoring of those inmates who are considered at risk. Earlier this year the European Court of Human Rights ruled that the UK was in breach of the right-to-life provisions guaranteed by article 2 of the European Convention on Human Rights⁽¹⁾. Although this case relates to the failure of the appropriate agencies to warn the prison authorities of the danger posed by a violent offender who subsequently killed a cellmate, the parallels are clear. Dr Shukla explains how the prison system has reformed over the last few years in order to reduce the incidence of suicide attempts by the young offenders.

Digital photography is increasingly being used as a simple and quick method for taking clinical pictures and in this edition Philip Harrison describes how the technique could be used for telediagnosis in dermatology. There are, however,

important implications regarding patient confidentiality and a recent letter sent to consultant clinicians in Morecambe Bay from the chief executive and medical director⁽²⁾ sought to clarify the situation. Without doubt, digital image technology has tremendous potential for research, teaching and clinical records, but whilst it may be tempting to capture an image in the clinic or theatre, the advice from the trust is that all requests for clinical photography should be directed to the medical illustration department.

Peter Dyer
Editor

1 Edwards and Another v United Kingdom. Application No 46477/99 European Court of Human Rights. March 2002
The Times Law Report April 2002
2 Cumming I, Telford D. Digital photography (letter) March 2002

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