

editor's choice

know thyself

On the front cover of this month's *studentBMJ*, is the ancient Greek temple to the sun god, Apollo, built in 6 BCE, which housed the famous Oracle at Delphi. Inscribed on one of the walls is the maxim "gnothi seauton," or, in English, "know thyself." This ancient concept has held strong throughout time. In her editorial, **Brenda Beagan** argues that although understanding what makes other people tick is important, we first need to know ourselves (p 394). With this in mind, the *studentBMJ* takes another look at systems of belief—Sikhism (p 427), Buddhism (p 428), atheism (p 429), and transcendental meditation (p 426)—and explores their influence over the practice of medicine. For some, faith has taken centre stage in their understanding of medicine and patients' needs, but **Stephen Goldie** believes that religion has no place in medicine (p 435). This collection of articles follows on from a year ago when the *studentBMJ* focused on Islam, Judaism, Christianity, and Hinduism. You can read these articles on studentbmj.com

Knowing thyself embraces more than faith—there are many different facets to self knowledge. In the Reviews section, **Panos Alexopoulos** takes a look at the book *Middlesex*, which centres on the story of a hermaphrodite trying to comprehend the complex interplay of genetic makeup and the environment in personality development (p 433). In the same section, **Suneeta Kochhar** visits an exhibition in Chicago where the fight against breast cancer is explored through a montage of pictures and collages (p 434). And on p 430, **Andrew Iles**, conscious of a stammer that he has had since childhood, gives his perspective on the impact this condition can have on communication and, therefore, on peoples' lives.

However, although knowing thyself is important, Beagan also points out that medics ought to bear in mind the health needs of different people and try to understand their position in society. In their editorial, **Clare Hughes** and **Amy Evans** outline the health needs of women who have sex with women (p 395). And in careers, **Rusheng Chew** talks to the human rights doctor, **Dlawer Ala'Aldeen**, about fleeing Iraq and his fight to help the plight of Kurdish people (p 417).

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