

editor's choice

publish or perish

Research—what is the point? Polly Brown poses and answers this question by in her editorial (p 46). A pervasive attitude—“publish or perish”—pressurises medical students to participate in research, but beyond this exercise in enhancing their CV, there is a need for good honest unbiased information.

According to David Weatherall, the face of research is changing (p 69). With the push towards a better understanding of molecular and cellular biology, the complex nature of modern research risks alienating doctors, who may need extra training in this field. Recent winners of the Nobel prize for physiology and medicine have contributed to the advancement of medical science in this way. (For tips on how to win a Nobel prize and become a science superstar see p 76.)

In his editorial (p 47), David Weatherall argues that scientists and researchers have a role to play in promoting unity between rich and developing nations. Although they do not have the economic capacity of governments to reshape the disparity between rich and poor, researchers can contribute individually and at university level.

But research need not mean imprisonment in a lonely laboratory with only test tubes and a microscope to share your woes. Steve Seale discovered this when he found himself halfway up Mount Everest quizzing climbers about altitude sickness (p 78). Or, you could even earn yourself big bucks and a first class ticket to world domination by plying your trade for the pharmaceutical industry (p 66).

Not sure where to start or what all the jargon means? Check out our guide to writing a case report, which may provide you with your first tentative steps on the research ladder (p 60). Or follow our beginner's guide to using PubMed (p 62) and you may find the paper that propels you on.

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