- 9 Waitzman NJ, Smith KR. Separate but lethal: the effects of economic segregation on mortality in metropolitan America. *Milbank Mem Fund Q* 1998;76:341-73.
- 10 Kennedy BP, Kawachi I, Glass R, Prothrow-Stith D. Income distribution, socioeconomic status, and self rated health in the United States: multilevel analysis. *BMJ* 1998;317:917-21.
- 11 Soobader M-J, LeClere FB. Aggregation and the measurement of income inequality: effects on morbidity. *Soc Sci Med* 1999;48:733-44.
- 12 Stainstreet D, Scott-Samuel A, Bellis MA. Income inequality and mortality in England. *J Public Health Med* 1999;21:205-7.
- 13 Szwarcwald CL, Bastos FI, Viacava F, de Andrade CL. Income inequality and homicide rates in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. *Am J Public Health* 1999;89:845-80.
- 14 *World Bank Development Indicators CD-ROM*. Washington DC: World Bank, 1997.
- 15 WHO Statistical Database. www.who.int/whosis/hfa/countries/index.html (accessed June 1999).
- 16 Goodman A, Webb S. *For richer, for poorer. The changing distribution of income in the UK*. London: Institute for Fiscal Studies, 1994.
- 17 Charlton J, Murphy M. *The health of adult Britain 1841-1994*. London: HMSO, 1994.
- 18 Backlund E, Sorlie PD, Johnson NJ. The shape of the relationship between income and mortality in the United States: evidence from the national longitudinal mortality study. *Ann Epidemiol* 1996;6:1-9.
- 19 Ecob R, Davey Smith G. Income and health: what is the nature of the relationship? *Soc Sci Med* 1999;48:693-705.
- 20 Gravelle H. How much of the relation between population mortality and unequal distribution of income is a statistical artefact? *BMJ* 1998;316:382-5.
- 21 Koopman JS, Lynch JW. Individual causal models and population systems models in epidemiology. *Am J Public Health* 1999;89:1170-5.
- 22 Diez-Roux AV. Bringing context back into epidemiology: variables and fallacies in multilevel analysis. *Am J Public Health* 1998;88:216-22.
- 23 Fiscella K, Franks P. Poverty or income inequality as predictor of mortality: longitudinal cohort study. *BMJ* 1997;314:1724-7.
- 24 Wolfson M, Kaplan GA, Lynch JW, Ross N, Backlund E. The relation between income inequality and mortality is not a statistical artefact. *BMJ* 1999;319:953-7.
- 25 Wilkinson RG. *Unhealthy societies: the afflictions of inequality*. London: Routledge, 1996.
- 26 Wilkinson RG. Health inequalities: relative or absolute material standards. *BMJ* 1997;314:591-5.
- 27 Lynch JW, Due P, Muntaner C, Davey Smith G. Social capital—is it a good investment strategy for public health? *J Epidemiol Community Health* (in press).
- 28 Diener E, Diener M, Diener C. Factors predicting the subjective well-being of nations. *J Pers Soc Psychol* 1995;69:851-64.
- 29 Kawachi I, Kennedy BP, Lochner K, Prothrow-Stith D. Social capital, income inequality, and mortality. *Am J Public Health* 1997;87:1491-9.
- 30 Smith T. Factors relating to misanthropy in contemporary American society. *Soc Sci Res* 1997;26:170-96.
- 31 Davey Smith G, Egger M. Commentary: understanding it all—health, meta-theories, and mortality trends. *BMJ* 1996;313:1584-5.
- 32 Davey Smith G. Income inequality and mortality: why are they related? Income inequality goes hand in hand with underinvestment in human resources. *BMJ* 1996;312:987-8.
- 33 Muntaner C, Lynch JW. Income inequality and social cohesion versus class relations: a critique of Wilkinson's neo-Durkheimian research program. *Int J Health Serv* 1999;29:59-81.
- 34 Muntaner C, Lynch JW, Oates G. The social class determinants of income inequality and social cohesion. *Int J Health Serv* 1999;29:699-732.
- 35 Newman KS. *No shame in my game: the working poor in the inner city*. New York: Knopf, 1999.
- 36 Lynch JW. Income inequality and health: expanding the debate. *Soc Sci Med* (in press).
- 37 Woolcock M. Social capital and economic development: toward a theoretical synthesis and policy framework. *Theory and Society* 1998;27:151-208.
- 38 Szreter S. A new political economy for New Labour—the importance of social capital. *Renewal* 1999;7:30-44.
- 39 Wainwright D. The political transformation of the health inequalities debate. *Crit Soc Policy* 1996;49:67-82.
- 40 Ross NA, Wolfson MC, Dunn JR, Berthelot J-M, Kaplan GA, Lynch JW. Relation between income inequality and mortality in Canada and in the United States: cross sectional assessment using census data and vital statistics. *BMJ* 2000;320:898-902.
- 41 Sapolsky RM. Hormonal correlates of personality and social contexts: from non-human to human primates. In: Panter-Brick C, Worthman CM, eds. *Hormones, health and behavior*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999:18-46.
- 42 Gough I, Thomas T. Why do levels of human welfare vary among nations? *Int J Health Serv* 1994;24:715-48.
- 43 World Bank. *Improving women's health in India*. Washington, DC: World Bank, 1996.
- 44 Kabir M, Krishnan TN. Social intermediation and health change: lessons from Kerala. In: Das Gupta M, Chen LC, Krishnan TN, eds. *Health, poverty and development in India*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1996.
- 45 Davey Smith G, Hart C, Blane D, Gillis C, Hawthorne V. Lifetime socioeconomic position and mortality: prospective observational study. *BMJ* 1997;314:547-52.
- 46 Davey Smith G, Hart C, Blane D, Hole D. Adverse socioeconomic circumstances in childhood and mortality: prospective observational study. *BMJ* 1998;316:1631-5.
- 47 Lynch JW, Kaplan GA, Salonen JT. Why do poor people behave poorly? Variations in adult health behaviour and psychosocial characteristics, by stage of the socioeconomic lifecycle. *Soc Sci Med* 1997;44:809-20.
- 48 Lynch JW, Kaplan GA. Socioeconomic position. In: Berkman LF, Kawachi I, eds. *Social epidemiology*. New York: Oxford University Press (in press).

(Accepted 22 February 2000)

A memorable afternoon Fifty five years later

A February afternoon in medical outpatients. Seventeen follow ups and six new patients. And there was a new senior house officer (SHO) to show the ropes to. A German, from Dresden. Very nice chap, unusually curious about war time England. Yes, there had been some excitement in this fenland market town about one particular incident at that time. In fact, one of the clinic patients expected that day had previously told me about it. Billy B had been on anti-aircraft duty in Grantham in 1942 defending a tank factory. They had seen almost no action, but one night a stray German bomber on the way home from Coventry had famously been hit by flak from Billy B's unit, forcing it to lose height gradually, jettison bombs, and crash land 32 miles later, in a field just north of this town.

Billy came in and confirmed his story. Apparently, the German crew had all jumped safely from the wrecked Dornier to the ground. Some locals arrived. The crew made no effort to run off, instead taking care to shepherd people away from the burning plane and the risk of exploding ammunition. Then, in a reversal of roles the crew had been arrested by a constable and the civil defence, with a truncheon and pitch forks. It turned out that the pilot spoke some English and had visited Boston before the war. His family knew the proprietor of the White Hart Hotel, George M, who was summoned as an intermediary.

Outpatients continued, and later on the list was Jim M, son of George. Jim added that the captives had been taken for the rest of that night to the cells in the Guildhall, where the Pilgrim Fathers had been held 300 years earlier. He also told us exactly where the

plane had come down, in a field backing on to Mrs L's back garden.

Half an hour passed in the clinic and the same Mrs L was shown in by the sister. She emphasised how considerate the Germans had been, looking after bystanders who did not see the danger. Mrs L had been in bed when the bomber came down and watched the flames from her window. She and her husband still live there.

Afterwards the SHO and I reflected on the coincidences that had brought these people to one outpatient clinic, 55 years after the events in the wheat field on the edge of town. The clinic nurse, Sister Janet, chipped in. There was more. As a toddler her husband had been orphaned by a stick of bombs in Grantham, dropped by this same plane after being hit by Billy B's anti-aircraft guns. The SHO and I sipped our tea silently for a few moments before I finished my letters.

Martin Fairman *consultant physician, Boston, Lincolnshire*

We welcome articles of up to 600 words on topics such as *A memorable patient, A paper that changed my practice, My most unfortunate mistake*, or any other piece conveying instruction, pathos, or humour. If possible the article should be supplied on a disk. Permission is needed from the patient or a relative if an identifiable patient is referred to. We also welcome contributions for "Endpieces," consisting of quotations of up to 80 words (but most are considerably shorter) from any source, ancient or modern, which have appealed to the reader.