tered by her GP, the serial killer Harold Shipman. She remained in the hospital in a persistent vegetative state until her death 14 months later.

Although hospital records showed that she had received 20 mg of morphine, an extraordinarily large dose, neither doctor lodged a complaint or made inquiries into what had happened.

Owen Dyer *London*

Prostate cancer charity wants better information for patients

About one in four men in the United Kingdom with prostate cancer are dissatisfied with their care, a survey of more than 1000 men with the disease shows.

The Prostate Cancer Charity's survey of 1143 men who had the disease diagnosed in the past three years showed that more than a third did not have access to a specialist nurse to discuss their diagnosis and 43% were not given any written information about the disease or its treatments and side effects.

Nearly a quarter of men who said they were alone when their diagnosis was broken to them wished they had had someone with them.

Klaus Morales *BMJ*

The Real Man's Prostate Cancer Journey: The First National Survey is available at www.prostate-cancer.org.uk.

Romania still faces high abortion rate 16 years after fall of Ceausescu

The number of abortions in Romania is declining but is still the highest in Europe, as older women in particular have failed to take on the idea of contraception, which was illegal in the country until 1989.

The First Step, a Romanian non-governmental organisation offering counselling and advice to pregnant women, says that in 2002 79 in every 1000 women in

the country underwent an abortion, totalling around half a million terminations.

In comparison, the association says, the rate in the same year in the United Kingdom was 15.6 in every 1000 women and in Germany 7.6 in 1000 women.

In its report, the organisation claimed: "The average Romanian woman will have three or four abortions in her life, compared with no more than one for women in the West. Romania has the highest abortion rate in Europe. Around 20% per cent of Romanian women who have multiple abortions are left infertile as a result."

The dictator Nicolae Ceausescu banned abortions in 1966 along with all contraceptives, and sex education. When the ban was lifted in 1989 the population was ignorant of any birth control methods.

Michael Leidig *Bucharest*

NHS must increase capacity to deliver cancer treatment

Cancer experts have called for urgent action to ensure that the NHS is prepared for an expected 28% increase in cancer prevalence across the United Kingdom over the next 20 years. The Cancer Capacity Coalition, a collective body of cancer specialists and charities, said that if action was not taken patients' access to treatment will be blocked at the point of drug administration.

The report highlighted several "hurdles," such as the payment by results funding structure in the NHS, which offered perverse incentives.

Trusts, for example, faced a substantial loss in revenue from a drop in the number of visits by patients to hospital or in inpatient stays when they replaced intravenous treatment with oral treatments.

Adrian O'Dowd *London*

Optimising Service Capacity to Meet Demand for Cancer Drug Treatment Delivery can be obtained from Helen Crow on tel 020 7611 3654.

"Health coaching" is to be offered to poor people in Scotland

Bryan Christie *Edinburgh*

Coaching is to be offered to people in deprived areas of Scotland to help them adopt healthier lifestyles, as part of what is being described as a radical shift in the country's health system.

A 10 year plan designed to improve health in Scotland will move the focus away from hospital based care and on to preventive and support services in the community. It will mean more resources for tackling health inequalities, intensive case management for people with chronic conditions, and more support for self care.

The plan, *Delivering for Health*, is based on recommendations made earlier this year by a working group headed by David Kerr, professor of cancer therapeutics and clinical pharmacology at Radcliffe Infirmary, Oxford (*BMJ* 2005;330:1288). At the time Professor Kerr described the proposals on preventive care as unprecedented in any European health system.

The plan will involve establishing enhanced primary care teams in deprived areas to identify people at risk. They will then be given advice and support on changing their lifestyle. It is based on work carried out by Julian Tudor Hart in Wales in the 1960s. He managed to improve health outcomes in the South Wales industrial village of Glyncoerrwg by actively seeking cases and implementing preventive interventions and regular follow-up.

Scotland's health minister,

Andy Kerr, said: "This is a fundamental shift in the way we want our NHS to work. As good as the work is that goes on in our hospitals, we have to try to help people avoid having to use those services."

"I want to see health care that gets out into communities and into workplaces—knocking on doors and talking to people—to identify who is at risk of a heart attack, cancer, diabetes, or high cholesterol and helping them take action early to stop that happening. That is why we will be targeting resources for these services where they are needed most: to people living in areas with the worst health record."

The plan also proposes a restructuring of hospital services, with more centralisation of specialist services, backed up by a network of local general hospitals. Planned and emergency work will be separated. A national information and communication technology system is to be established, which will include the development of an electronic system of patients' records to improve the integration, quality, and productivity of NHS Scotland.

Peter Terry, chairman of the BMA in Scotland, said "The NHS in Scotland has historically been blighted by ad hoc planning and short termism, therefore we welcome this long term vision for the NHS."

Delivering for Health is available at www.scotland.gov.uk/publications.

Could a health coach have helped TV character Rab C Nesbitt?