that required by the threshold used above? There is support for cognitive behaviour therapy for social phobia, post-traumatic stress disorder, and especially for bulimia,^{2 15} and there has been extensive discussion about the efficacy of other brief psychotherapies in depression.¹⁶ What about the two most commonly used psychological treatments, counselling and long term psychodynamic psychotherapy? Unfortunately, there is no evidence that the results of either therapy are reliably better than placebo treatment,¹⁷ and purchasers, providers, and consumers might well decide that they are not treatments that a wise health service should offer.¹⁸ Conversely, prudent purchasers, smart providers, and informed consumers might well search out therapy with the cognitive behavioural techniques listed above, especially those supported by best practice protocols and those that include some means of quality control.²

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Aging: a global theme issue

More than 100 medical journals from around the world are participating

The *BMJ* will be publishing in October 1997 a theme issue on aging, and we invite readers to submit papers and ideas. We will be doing this together with more than 100 other international medical journals, including the *Lancet*, *JAMA*, and some of the specialist journals of the BMJ Publishing Group. The theme of aging has been selected after a three stage Delphi process among more than 100 editors. First, editors were asked to suggest subjects: they nominated 94. Next, they voted on all 94 and finally on the top 12. Aging came out on top in both rounds. Our aims are to prompt research and thinking on this vital issue and to promote aging on scientific, medical, social, and political agendas.

The demographic predictions for the population make aging research an imperative. While nations have already experienced dramatic increases in their older population since the turn of the century, further increases are anticipated. By the fast approaching year 2030, the proportion of those over the age of 85, the frailest group of society, is expected to increase by as much as sixfold in some Western nations. Policy makers worldwide need to give further thought to the implications of the aging of the world's population, and they need high quality evidence to aid their thinking and planning.

Aging is an excellent choice for a global theme issue because it affects every dimension of health care. The biology of aging is fascinating scientifically. Every organ system of the body changes as we age, and so each medical specialty must consider aging effects. With longer life expectancy comes more chronic illness and disease. In addition, frail older people are vulnerable to social isolation and reduced socioeconomic status, making a multidisciplinary approach to aging essential.

Healthcare systems worldwide are now dealing with the disease burden associated with aging, and facing the health policy implications of providing care to this population. The economic implications of providing for frail older people in both the community and in long term care settings are a concern for politicians, healthcare providers, and planners everywhere. Elderly people are becoming more organised politically, but in this climate of cost cutting they remain vulnerable to healthcare rationing.

In our theme issue we want to contemplate the challenges of aging as well as strategies to promote healthy aging. We welcome submissions on any aspect of aging, and your suggestions on what we might address and the papers we may want to commission. We have decided against focusing on a particular aspect of aging, and we will consider the best manuscripts we receive. However, those planning to submit material might consider the following issues: the particular problems of people in the advanced age group (85 years of age and over); the medical and social issues unique to older women; optimal prescribing in the elderly; ethnicity, and aging; the ethical issues surrounding aging; managed care and the elderly; developing outcomes for use in long term care settings; and making health care and medical research applicable to frail elderly people. Submitted papers will be peer reviewed in the normal way, and we ask that contributors submit papers by the end of March 1997. We look forward to receiving a large amount of high quality submissions. The international journals will all publish their theme issues in October 1997, and we will hold press conferences around the globe. We want the world to take notice.

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Correction

Hitler's plans for genocide: a speech from 1939

An editorial error occurred in the transcript of Adolf Hitler's speech (7 December, p 1416). The last sentence of the third paragraph should read, "Who after all is today speaking about the destruction of the Armenians?"