

## HIGHLIGHTS IN THIS ISSUE

This issue features groups of papers reporting controlled trials, depression assessment and biological aspects, and disorders in the elderly. The lead editorial reviews recent studies of the effects on cognition of tryptophan depletion, an important probe of serotonin function.

**Controlled trials in anxiety disorders, chronic fatigue and GP education.** Four papers report findings of controlled trials. Marks and colleagues (pp. 9–17), in phobic and panic disorders, find computer guided self-exposure as effective as clinician guided exposure, although with somewhat higher dropout, and both superior to relaxation. In another paper on anxiety disorders, Issakidis *et al.* (pp. 19–35) demonstrate the substantial increase in cost-effectiveness that would result from use of evidence-based treatments. In chronic fatigue Ridsdale and colleagues (pp. 37–49) find cognitive therapy and graded exercise approximately equal, with marginal advantages for cognitive therapy, while Hartz *et al.* (pp. 51–61) find ginseng ineffective. Gask *et al.* (pp. 63–72) find that training GPs in assessment and management of depression does not improve the outcome.

**Depression.** Several papers report studies of depression. Trivedi and colleagues (pp. 73–82) report psychometric and validation data on an increasingly used rating scale, the Inventory of Depressive States, in clinician and self-report, longer and brief versions. Airaksinen *et al.* (pp. 83–91) report differing patterns of cognitive task impairments in population-based samples with depression in different diagnostic subgroups, across a range of ages. Symonds *et al.* (pp. 93–102) report mood, cognitive and HPA axis changes in normal young women occurring with the menstrual cycle. Sobczak and colleagues (pp. 103–112) find lower HDL cholesterol and higher omega-6 fatty acids in first-degree relatives of bipolar patients, with some changes omega-3 fatty acids, and associations between these and prolactin response to tryptophan and mood. In another paper investigating serotonergic function, Bruce *et al.* (pp. 113–124) find women with bulimia nervosa plus avoidant personality disorder show blunted prolactin response to m-CPP.

**Disorders in the elderly.** Three papers report studies of the elderly. Baldwin *et al.* (pp. 125–136), in a further paper from a series of studies in vascular depression previously reported in *Psychological Medicine*, find that non-responders to medication show greater initial impairment on neuropsychological tests, particularly of executive function, and some evidence of more periventricular MRI hyperintensities. Duberstein *et al.* (pp. 137–146) report a psychological autopsy study of elderly suicides, with more evidence of mental illness, perceived physical illness, family discord and employment change than in sociodemographically matched controls. Nelson and colleagues (pp. 147–155), in elderly in the community, find a number of factors associated with increased costs of social care, health care or both.