

# Tackling the tickle

For the first time UK guidelines for the treatment of cough have been produced by the British Thoracic Society (p267), which has calculated that acute cough costs the British economy about £1bn a year. The guidelines are evidence-based and cover a spectrum of coughs from the trivial to the chronic that may indicate potentially life-threatening conditions and require prompt referral to a doctor.

Many sections of the guidance will not be relevant to day-to-day community pharmacy practice, and those parts that are, may seem no more than commonsense and simply reinforce the current practice of many pharmacists.

Viral cough is a case in point. Many customers swear by their preferred cough remedy and will continue to purchase it, whatever its effectiveness. However, other customers may be persuaded — on the basis of the guidelines — that a proprietary treatment is not going to make much difference to their symptoms and discover that lemon and honey offers as much soothing benefit.

As the profession is increasingly gearing up to manage minor ailments, to promote self care and, relatively soon, to prescribe independently, guidelines of this sort — even if only a part of them is of value to pharmacy — will become progressively more helpful. What is important is that such guidelines are independent of manufacturers, are produced by reputable clinicians and are evidence-based.

The Royal Pharmaceutical Society's "Practice Guidance" series goes some way to providing such information, although it is not comprehensive and many further topics could be usefully covered.

---

## Innovations and BPC 2006

Normally, the main summer holiday period comes to an end and pharmacists have time to draw breath before setting off for the British Pharmaceutical Conference.

Not so this year. BPC has been ousted from its normal slot at the end of September by the Labour Party, which is holding its own conference in Manchester that week. BPC starts, instead, this Monday.

One innovation this year is a joint BPC-PJ careers forum where pharmacists can find out about different opportunities and receive advice about personal career development. *The Journal* is also changing its coverage of BPC. Next week, we will be publishing the highlights of the event: some keynote speeches, news and awards. In the past, the rest of the coverage has been spread over the subsequent four issues of *The Journal*. This year we will be publishing a BPC supplement that will be distributed with the issue of 30 September. Look out for your copy — we hope it will make more sense to gather the material under one cover.

### Editor and editorial director

Olivia Timbs  
Tel 020 7572 2414

### Deputy editor

Andrew Haynes, MRPharmS  
*The Society section*  
Tel 020 7572 2421

### Managing editor

Graeme Smith, MRPharmS  
*Letters and other contributions*  
Tel 020 7572 2426

### Assistant editor

Michael Thompson  
*Editor — PJ Online*  
Tel 020 7572 2428

### News editor

Harriet Adcock, MRPharmS  
Tel 020 7572 2415

### Senior news and feature writer

Dawn Connelly, MRPharmS  
Tel 020 7572 2427

### News and feature writers

Tom Moberly  
Tel 020 7572 2417  
Matthew Wright, MRPharmS  
Tel 020 7572 2430

### Contributions editors

Gemma Cleveland  
*Reviews*  
Tel 020 7572 2416  
Lin-Nam Wang, MRPharmS  
*Continuing professional development*  
Tel 020 7572 2413

### Production editor

Christopher Icha

### Website controller

Gowan Clews  
Tel 020 7572 2418

### Personal assistant to the editor

Emma Kerby-Evans  
Tel 020 7572 2414

### Administrative assistant

Pauline Heslop  
*Branch meetings, copyright, permissions*  
Tel 020 7572 2422

### Editorial advisory board

Tim Albert  
Noel Baumber, FRPharmS  
Soraya Dhillon, MRPharmS  
Niall Dickson  
Steve Wicks, MRPharmS

### Head of sales

Philippa Stahelin

### Office administrator — sales

Jo Cook

### Display sales

Stuart Thomas

### Classified advertisement manager

Lily Emery

### Classified advertisement executive

Patrick Kearns

### Head of publishing services

John Wilson

### Production manager

Joanne Marks

### Production assistants

Hillary Carter  
Adam Jones

### Website controller — PJCareers

Clare Knights

### Director of publications

Charles Fry