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Primary Health Care
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Teaching Newsletter

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New Year's message

and Thank You

for GP teachers

from Prof. Trevor Thompson

Head of Primary Care teaching

Back in the BC era, we would tell our first-year students that their progression through the curriculum would feel less like an escalator at John Lewis and more like an Alton Towers roller-coaster. How prescient, as today we lunge again into the abyss of a third national lockdown. But somehow the train remains stubbornly on track.

Back in November we made the difficult decision to run the GP3 (third year) curriculum fully online for the 2020-2021 academic year. As students ascend to GP4 and GP5 so does the need for f2f clinical experience become more pressing. Despite some risks, senior opinion is unanimous - clinical teaching must continue through lockdown! The NHS has a voracious appetite for newly qualified doctors and in GP we have a vital role to play in that provision.

The arrival of Lateral Flow Tests in the clinical Academies has provided some comfort - our hope is that students, like other HCPs, should have access to twice weekly testing from early in the New Year. We are currently trying to discern the timeline for Covid vaccination of medical students. Meantime can I personally thank all our GP teachers for their efforts now and throughout this crisis? Primary Care is held in high esteem by our student community: they *really* appreciate the longitudinal relationships, the structured learning and the direct patient contact (f2f or otherwise). This is a doughty roller-coaster, even if the ride is overly long and we would all prefer to be heading for the candy floss.

Lateral flow testing for students

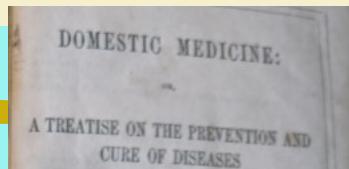
We understand Academies are making arrangements with students directly about this. Please liaise with your students about their results. Our hope is that students, like other HCPs, should have access to twice weekly testing from early in January.

Covid vaccination for students

Students are considered as NHS keyworkers (as our future Doctors) and the hope is the Academies will be providing Covid vaccinations to students. We are currently trying to discern the timeline for Covid vaccination of medical students.

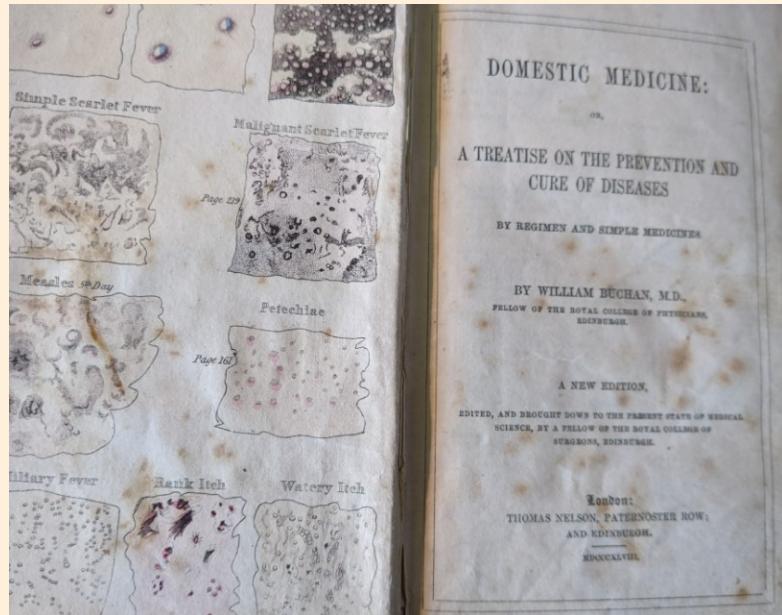
Are anti-vaxxers a new phenomenon?

Simon Thornton has dusted down and delved into a medical textbook from the 19th century to find an answer. Read more on [page 2](#).



Are anti-vaxxers a new phenomenon?

From Dr. Simon Thornton, GP Engagement Lead and Year 3 GP Co-Lead



As many of us embark on delivering the largest immunisation programme in history, I thought I would share a few brief excerpts from an 1847 copy of Buchan's Domestic Medicine regarding the smallpox vaccination. It makes us reflect on what a wonderful public health intervention vaccination is, and shows that the anti-vax movement is over 150 years old.

'The present method of inoculating in Britain is to make two or three slanting incisions in the arm, so superficial as not to pierce quite through the skin, with a lancet wet with fresh matter taken from a ripe pustule; afterwards the wounds are closed up, and left without a dressing.'

'I have often wished to see some plan established for rendering this salutary practice universal; but am afraid I shall never be so happy. The difficulties are many; yet the thing is by no means impracticable. The aim is great, no less than saving the lives of one-fourth part of mankind. What ought not to be attempted in order to accomplish so desirable an end.'

'No set of men have it so much in their power to render the practice of inoculation general as the clergy, the greatest opposition to it still arising from scruples of conscience, which they alone can remove. I would recommend it to them, not only to endeavour to remove the religious objections which weak minds may have to this salutary practice, but to enjoin it as a duty, and to point out the danger of neglecting to make use of a mean which Providence has put in our power, for saving the lives of our offspring. Surely such parents as willfully neglect the means of saving their children's lives, are as guilty as those who put them to death'

So when you're drawing up the Covid vaccine, spare a thought for how far vaccination has come in this country and how far we still have to go.