

with a “hot iron” to frighten it. Alternatively, placing a mouse or “any other crawling vermin” between the woman’s thighs would result in the womb leaping away in fright and back into the body.

In April this year I spoke to the East Anglian Interest Group for Contraception and Sexual Health in Bury St Edmunds, a meeting that was attended by a number of doctors. On telling them about this method of replacing the uterus, I asked the audience if they felt in their opinion that it might work. They all agreed it very well might by means of a sudden contraction of the womb. So once again we find that our predecessors may well have used methods that to us sound repulsive and barbaric, however there is no doubt that even some of the most extraordinary healing methods may have worked.

Future articles

The next article in this series will be on sexual imagery.

Acknowledgements

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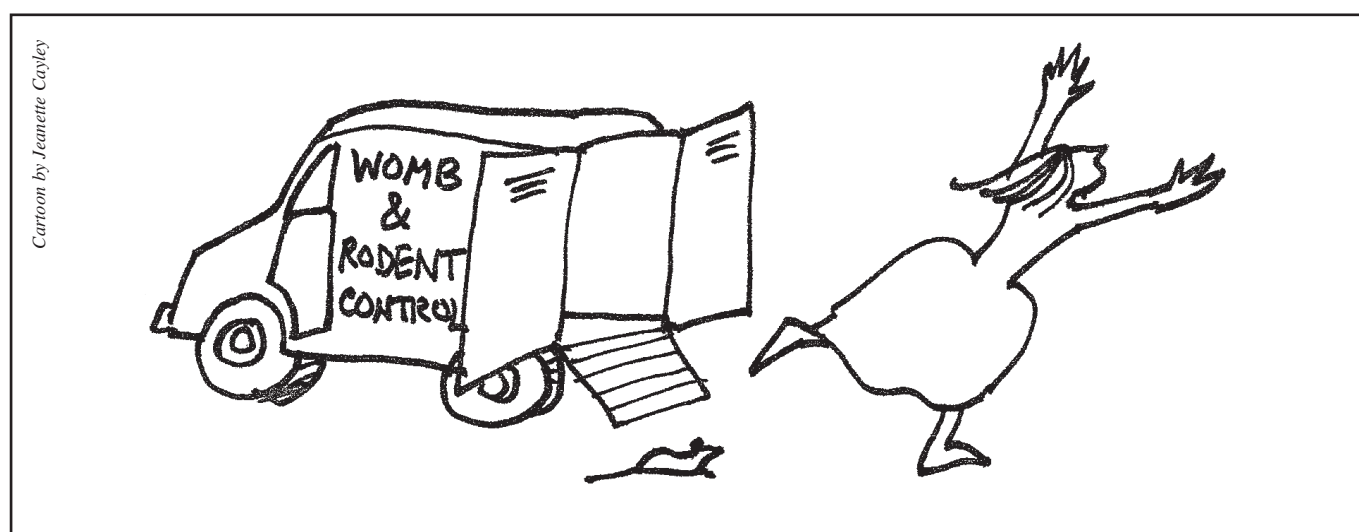
and advice: Professor R Arnott, Director of the Centre for the History of Medicine, University of Birmingham Medical School, Birmingham; Dr G Williams, British Museum, London; and the East Anglian Interest Group for Contraception and Sexual Health.

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About the Author

Lesley Smith is currently a postgraduate student in the Centre for the History of Medicine of the University of Birmingham, where she is developing a PhD in obstetrics and gynaecology in early modern Britain. She holds an Honorary Degree for “services to history”. She makes 200–300 public appearances a year and also works as a TV historian in the UK and abroad including North America. Lesley is also Curator of Tutbury Castle and is currently involved with a major research project with the British Museum, which is why she says it is taking her so long to finish her PhD! She is also a member of the Association of Medical Writers.



NEWS ROUNDUP

STARS Foundation Education Impact Award

The STARS Foundation Impact Awards support organisations committed to achieving excellence in the provision of services to disadvantaged children and encourage the replication of effective approaches and practices. Each Award provides US\$100 000 of unrestricted funding plus additional consultancy support tailored to meet the needs of the recipients. The winner of the 2007 Education Award is Student Partnership Worldwide (SPW) Tanzania for its work with young people to provide peer-to-peer sexual reproductive health education in remote rural communities.

As in most other parts of the world, it is the young who are most at risk from poverty, HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases in Tanzania. As a result of this, the young are not perceived as part of a solution, rather that they are part of the problem. There are few examples of young people taking a proactive role in addressing the challenges they face.

SPW Tanzania’s approach is different. Its goal is to ensure that young people make responsible choices concerning their sexual reproductive health and have a lead role in the decision-making processes that affect their lives and their communities. All its work is led by young people through a youth-led volunteer model, which enables it to deliver full-time holistic sexual reproductive health programmes in the most remote rural communities. The programmes reach as many as 75 000 young people each year through volunteer peer educators who have been placed in rural schools. Working in these remote communities for up to 7 months, these educators provide sexual reproductive health education and life skills training. The programmes are delivered for an annual cost of only US \$9 per child and many of the volunteers go on to university and gainful employment as a result of their experience. For further information about the STARS Foundation and Impact Awards visit their website.

Source: www.starsfoundation.org.uk

National PMS Week

Premenstrual tension or syndrome (PMS) affects over 23 million women in the UK alone. The National Association of Premenstrual Syndrome (NAPS) is the only independent charity in Europe that specialises in this specific area of women’s health. NAPS was founded in 1984, and during its 24-year history it has given help, advice and support to thousands of PMS sufferers.

National PMS Week, this year the week commencing 8 September 2008, will see the launch of the NAPS/PMS 7 Day Eating Plan written and researched by Nigel Denby, author, media nutritionist and NAPS Trustee. The Eating Plan is designed to help the millions of PMS sufferers reduce the severity of their PMS symptoms that causes anguish and misery to millions of women each month.

Source: www.pms.org.uk

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