£6,000-A-TERM ST PAUL'S OFFERS PARENTING CLASSES

One of the country's top girls' private schools is offering coaching lessons to high-flying parents who are struggling to juggle their careers with the demands of modern parenting.

Clarissa Farr, the head of St Paul's Girls' School in Hammersmith, west London, is giving seminars to parents that cover a range of issues from how to deal with their offspring's exam stress to setting boundaries for harmonious family life. The courses also cover how teenagers can stay safe in London and how to manage the London teenage party scene as a parent.

Two parenting courses have been held at the school so far and the demand for more is high.

The so-called high mistress of St Paul's, whose alumni of 'Old Paulinas' include actresses Natasha Richardson and Rachel Weisz, said that being a parent is the role for which people have "the least training".

Ms Farr said: "Parenting often finds people at their most vulnerable, even if their day job is ruling half the world. I have a lot of parents who find parenting itself a challenge."

She said that over recent years parents have become increasingly "time-poor" because of the long work hours expected of them. Due to the increase in use of portable gadgets such as the Blackberry, Ms Farr said that an "always on" culture has developed whereby people almost never have "downtime" for the family.

Research over the summer found that almost half of all parents have less than five hours to bond with their children each week.

The courses at St Paul's cover even the most basic aspects of modern parenting.

"It is offering active guidance for parents who are quite keen to get the school's view on even quite basic things like how much pocket money or what time bedtime should be," said Ms Farr.

She said that busy parents of children at the £6,000-a-term school can overcompensate for being away for long days by failing to be tough enough with their children.

"We're deceiving ourselves if we think we can bring up our children through an iPhone," she told The Sunday Times.

"If they have a problem and they want to talk to you, they want to talk to you and that is when you have to be prepared to set aside your own very well-organised agenda and listen. Some busy parents give their children everything except the boundaries they need to find their secure place within the family and at school," she said.

Many parents' diaries are so busy that they struggle to attend school events such as concerts and plays. To counter this, St Paul's is considering giving parents two year's advance notice of school events.

Adapted from ***The Guardian***
October 2012
(450 words)

Anglais - Texte 2

A PRISON WITH HUMANITY

Halden prison smells of freshly brewed coffee, in the workshop areas, in the games rooms and in the communal apartment-style areas, where prisoners live together in groups of eight.

Coffee makes you hungry, so in the afternoon the guards on Unit A – a separated wing where sex offenders are held for their own protection – bring inmates waffles and jam, which guards and inmates sit down and eat together.

Another remarkable thing is how quiet the prison is. There isn't any of the enraged, persistent banging of doors you hear in British prisons, not least because the prisoners are not locked up during much of the day. The governor, Mr Højdal, looks surprised when asked about figures for prisoner attacks on guards or prisoner-on-prisoner assaults. He says there isn't much violence here and he can't remember the last time there was a fight.

Halden is one of Norway's highest-security jails, holding rapists, murderers and paedophiles. Since it opened two years ago, at a cost of $217m, it has acquired a reputation as the world's most humane prison. It is the flagship of the Norwegian justice system, where the focus is on rehabilitation rather than punishment.

Halden has attracted attention globally for its design and its relative splendour. Set in a forest, the prison blocks are a model of minimalist chic. At times, the environment feels more Scandinavian boutique hotel than class A prison.

Every Halden cell has a flatscreen television, its own toilet (with a door!), a shower, which comes with large, soft, white towels. All cells have cupboards and desks and huge, unbarred windows. "There was much focus on the design", Højdal says. "We wanted it to be light and positive."

Obviously the hotel comparison is a stupid one, since the problem with being in prison is that you cannot leave. Even if this prison compound has more in common with a modern, rural university campus, the key point about it is that, hidden behind the trees, is a thick, tall, concrete wall, impossible to scale.

Given the constraints of needing to keep 245 high-risk people incarcerated, creating an environment that was as unprisonlike as possible was a priority. "The architecture is not like other prisons," Højdal says. "We felt it shouldn't look like a prison. We wanted to create normality. If you can't see the wall, this could be anything, anywhere. Life behind the walls should be as much like life outside the walls as possible."

This principle is governed by a key feature of the Norwegian sentencing system: no life sentences and a maximum term of 21 years. Everyone imprisoned inside Norwegian prisons will be released – maybe not Breivik, but everyone else will go back to society.

Adapted from ***The Guardian Weekly***
June 2012
(452 words)

AN EQUAL START IN LIFE

When does gender inequality take root? In the cot, according to the Bourdarias nursery in Saint Ouen, in the suburbs of Paris, the first infant care centre in France to introduce a policy to combat discrimination in 2009.

Last month France's minister for women's rights visited the nursery to promote this pioneering work. "We will not achieve equality if we do not combat the construction of stereotypes as early as possible," the minister said.

"We aim to give children the foundations to develop properly," says the head of the nursery. "But what we observe is that even very young boys and girls don't have the same degree of self-confidence".

"Children develop by imitation, with adults exerting considerable influence," she suggests. "We bring up our children in line with our own representations and with the expectations society places on each sex. Little girls should smile and be sensible, little boys should be brave." Parents are not the only ones to blame. Teachers, the media, literature, the childcare and toy industries bombard toddlers with stereotypes.

The nursery looks much the same as any other, with the usual toys. Without denying differences, its "proactive egalitarian pedagogy" seeks to avoid locking children up in boxes, with pink and tea sets for girls, blue and lorries for boys. "We try to keep toys as neutral as possible, without banning dolls or garages," says one of the educators. "Simply, we show the young girls that they can play with the toy cars, make a noise, shout and climb. Boys wanting to play with dolls are encouraged too."

"The merit of this pedagogy is that it enables everyone to broaden the scope of what is possible," says a sociologist at Lille-1 University and a specialist in children and gender relations. "Gender discrimination reduces the opportunities for young women, but is also damaging for their male counterparts, imposing aggressive behaviour and requiring them to hold back emotion."

Everything is checked: the activities available to children, but also relations between adults of both sexes at the nursery, even everyday language. "Adults need to work hard on their own behaviour to gain an awareness of the biased way they treat boys and girls," the sociologist explains. "They're always convinced they are perfectly even-handed."

The work at the Bourdarias nursery demands parental support, but the response in this socially mixed area – where executives from the capital rub shoulders with the residents of low-income housing estates – has been positive. The nursery is now heavily oversubscribed.

Childcare specialists are convinced that such policies enhance mutual respect between the sexes and can reduce violence against women. But the approach needs to be applied on a larger scale and extended to schools.

Adapted from ***The Guardian Weekly***
October 2012
(454 words)

Anglais - Texte 4

AN OCEAN OF TROUBLES

In 1998 a rise in sea temperatures caused by El Niño, a periodic eastward surge of warm Pacific water, caused a mass bleaching of the world's coral reefs, the temporary home of perhaps a quarter of all marine species. Had this happened to rain forests - coral's terrestrial equivalent - a sea-change in attitudes to the environment could have been expected. But because this change occurred in the sea, the calamity drew remarkable little comment.

Traditional attitudes towards the sea, as something distant to humanity, are out of date. The effects of overfishing, agricultural pollution and climate change are devastating marine ecosystems. The industrial pollution that is cooking the climate could also cause another problem: carbon dioxide, absorbed by the sea from the atmosphere, turns to carbonic acid, which is a threat to coral, mussels, oysters and any creature with a shell of calcium carbonate.

The enormity of the sea's troubles, and their implications for mankind, are worrying. Yet it is remarkable how little this is recognised by policymakers - let alone the general public. Human activity is changing the oceans faster than at almost any time in the planet's history. Take overfishing. The industrialisation of fishing fleets has massively increased man's capability to scoop protein from the deep and to put to sea for weeks on end. Most commercial species have been reduced by over 75% and some by 99%. Overfishing is eradicating the primary protein source of one in five people, many of them poor.

Global warming is another problem. So far, the sea has been a buffer against it: because the heat capacity of water is several times that of air, the oceans have absorbed most of the additional heat, sparing the continents further warming. Yet this is now starting to change-faster than almost anyone had dared imagine. One effect of the warming ocean, for example, is to increase the density difference between the surface and the chilly deep, which in turn decreases mixing of them. That means less oxygen is making it down to the depths, reducing the liveability of the oceans. Fish under temperature and oxygen stress will reach smaller sizes, live less long and devote a bigger fraction of their energy to survival at the cost of growth and reproduction. Not for 55m years has there been oceanic disruption of comparable severity to the calamity that lies just a hundred years ahead.

So what is to be done? Solutions range from the obvious - reducing carbon emissions - to technical solutions like genetic improvements to aquaculture stocks. None is impossible. We can change. We can turn around our impact on the biosphere. We had better do so.

Adapted from ***The Economist***
May 2012
(447 words)

ANTI-JUNK FOOD LOBBY TO TARGET 2014 COMMONWEALTH GAMES

A powerful coalition of doctors, dentists, children's charities and consumer groups has urged the organisers of the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games to ban all sponsorship and advertising from fast-food and fizzy drink companies. The influential groups behind the Children's Food Campaign have claimed firms selling burgers, fizzy drinks or chocolates should not be allowed to promote their products at the 2014 Games while Scotland is in the grip of an obesity epidemic.

Their call follows criticism of the organisers of London's Olympics after sponsors, including McDonald's, Coca-Cola and Cadbury, monopolised food branding in the Olympic park and athletes' village. Such sponsorship contributed £612 million in revenue to the London Olympiad.

But the Children's Food Campaign, which is backed by dozens of organisations including the British Medical Association, Children's Society, Barnardos, the British Dental Association, Consumer Focus and Save the Children, plans to mount a two-year campaign to persuade Glasgow 2014 organisers to pursue "healthier" sponsorship deals instead.

Last night, Malcolm Clark, the campaign's co-ordinator, said: "We are calling for a junk food ban at Glasgow 2014 in advertising and sponsorship. This is a real opportunity to make a mark, and go over and above what the London Olympics did.

"It's all about making healthy choices easier for parents and children. Scotland has a particularly vulnerable population where obesity and dental problems are high. Special measures are needed. We believe Glasgow can learn from the Olympics, because we feel its legacy has been downplayed in terms of healthy eating. Our members will be pushing the 2014 organisers to choose other companies which don't make junk food. And if they do, we will report it."

The most recent statistics from the Scottish Health Survey suggest 27 per cent of people aged 16 to 64 were obese in 2010. One in five children in Scotland is overweight, with one in 12 classed as obese. Health professionals blame a high-fat diet and lack of exercise.

The London 2012 Games provided a worldwide platform for McDonald's, Coca-Cola and Cadbury. McDonald's, which has sponsored the Olympics for 36 years and is signed up for another eight, had four restaurants in London's Olympic Park, one of which can seat 1,500 customers. Coca-Cola has sponsored the Olympics since 1928 and is signed up until 2020. It fronted the Olympic torch relay and was London's official soft drinks provider.

Glasgow 2014, which is not bound by such long-term deals, has named sponsors including computer firm Dell or law firm Harper Macleod. No food or drinks firms have so far been selected but a Glasgow 2014 source said organisers had not yet imposed any restrictions. Nothing is ruled in or out."

Adapted from ***News.Scotsman.com***
August 2012
(449 words)

Anglais - Texte 6

APPS ALERT THE DOCTOR WHEN TROUBLE LOOMS

For many patients with chronic medical conditions like depression, pain or diabetes, the pattern is predictable: The more they suffer, the more they draw inward. Doctors may not see them until they are in crisis and show up in an emergency room.

Now a digital-era solution is emerging. When patients withdraw, their cellphones may reach out for them. The phones use an app that tracks how often they send text messages and place calls, and how often they move and where they go. If their habits and patterns deviate in a way that suggests they've become withdrawn, the app alerts a doctor or other caregiver to check in.

A handful of hospitals and medical centers have recently begun testing and using the technology, with financial backing for these digital flares coming from medical chains, the United States military and insurance companies.

The novel approach relies on technology that is increasingly standard on smartphones: global positioning systems and accelerometers that can track location and movement.

Software is still being tested and studied for its effectiveness. But mental health experts and researchers say it shows great promise - not just for spotting worsening conditions, but also for picking up on behavior changes that suggest someone has stopped taking medication or needs a dosage change.

The companies and researchers behind the technology say they are aware of the privacy concerns. But they note that the patients must consent, and that the information goes only to health professionals or to designated family members. They also say it is too early to gauge what effect it will have on doctors and how they work with patients.

The technology is part of a field often referred to as "big data" that captures and sifts through enormous amounts of data to better understand and predict behavior, like buying patterns, stock-market movements and conditions that can lead to military conflict.

In the health field, researchers in labs across the country are pursuing a host of big-data technologies, including ways to better assess patient behaviors and measure drug effectiveness. The idea of collecting patient movements and communications could give doctors more accurate evidence of behavior than relying on patients' memory or efforts to describe their problems.

A computer science professor said the promising early research points to possibilities like increasingly personalized treatments based on assessments of individual patterns of behavior. Doctors could better understand how a particular treatment, medication or dosage affects a patient.

"I'm very excited, but there is work to be done," she said, adding: "If health was easy, we wouldn't be so sick."

Adapted from ***The New York Times***
October 2012
(446 words)

ARE MEN AN ENDANGERED SPECIES?

In 2009, in a beach town in Virginia where my family had been vacationing for several years, I noticed something curious. Every time I ventured to the supermarket, say, or the ice-cream store – I almost never saw any men.

But as I spent time researching the subject I began to understand that something seismic had shifted in the economy and the culture and that both sexes were going to have to adjust to an entirely new way of working and living and even falling in love.

The new story was that women, for the first time in history, had in many ways surpassed men. In the recession, three-quarters of the 7.5 million jobs lost were lost by men. The worst-hit industries were overwhelmingly male: construction, manufacturing, high finance. The recession revealed a profound economic shift that has been going on for at least 30 years.

In 2009, the balance of the workforce tipped toward women, who continue to occupy around half of the nation's jobs. Women worldwide dominate colleges and professional schools. Of the 15 job categories projected to grow the most in the United States over the next decade, 12 are occupied primarily by women. Our vast and struggling middle class is slowly turning into a matriarchy, with men increasingly absent from the workforce and from home, as women make all the decisions.

In the past, men derived their advantage largely from size and strength, but the post-industrial economy is indifferent to brawn. A service and information economy rewards the opposite qualities – the ones that can't be easily replaced by a machine. These attributes – social intelligence, open communication, the ability to sit still and focus – seem to come easily to women.

Now a much more radical shift seems to have come about. Women are not just catching up anymore; they are becoming the standard by which success is measured. "Why can't you be more like your sister?" is a phrase that resonates with many parents of school-age children. As parents imagine the pride of watching a child succeed as an adult, it is more often a girl than a boy that they see in their mind's eye.

To a certain extent, women also pay a high price for this. Among the college-educated class, ambivalence comes in the form of excess choice. Educated women take their time finding the perfect partner, seeking out creative, rewarding jobs, and then come home and parent their children with home-schooling intensity. Their lives are rich with possibilities their mothers never dreamed of. And yet in most surveys, women these days are not more likely to rate themselves happier than women did in the 1970s.

Adapted from ***The Observer***
September 2012
(445 words)

Anglais - Texte 8

ARE MOBILE PHONES SAFE FOR CHILDREN TO USE?

Mobiles have been in use for a relatively short time and cancers can take decades to develop. However most scientists seem to agree about one thing – that if mobiles are hazardous, children may be more vulnerable than the rest of us to their possible ill-effects.

"If the penetration of the electromagnetic waves goes for four centimetres into the brain, four centimetres into the adult brain is just the temporal lobe," says Dr Annie Sasco of the Institute of Public Health, Epidemiology and Development in Bordeaux.

"There are not too many important functions in the temporal lobe – but in a child, the more central brain structures are going to be exposed."

"In addition, kids have a skull which is thinner, less protective, they have a higher content of water in the brain, so there are many reasons why they absorb more of the same radiation," she adds.

The International Agency for Research on Cancer has recently reclassified mobile phones as possibly carcinogenic. The re-classification was the result of a meeting held at the headquarters of the world's leading scientists in the field in Lyons.

They reviewed experimental data from the longest running research project into the use of mobile phones by brain cancer sufferers.

The strongest evidence comes from the studies of cancer in humans and there was some evidence that there may be an association between the use of mobile cell-phones and certain types of brain cancer.

But while the GSMA acknowledged that some mobile phone users may be concerned, it said that present safety standards remain valid, and that there was need for further research.

"I think mobile phones are a risk for brain tumours and we have already quite substantial epidemiological evidence showing that people who use cell-phones for more than 10 years have about a doubling in their risk of glioma, which is a brain tumour, quite often fatal," says Dr Annie Sasco.

Certainly for parents, giving children mobiles helps to keep tabs on them when they are out and about in a world full of hazards. But if the hazard is the phone itself, then we would be wise to take precautions.

After 20 or so years with mobiles, there is no clear evidence that mobile phone radiation damages health and many experts say there is nothing to worry about. But the UN says there might be a problem, and others believe there definitely is an issue.

So, it is up to the individual to decide whether to dismiss the warnings or take minor precautions to ensure those thought most vulnerable do not blame us if the most dire predictions do turn out to be correct.

Adapted from ***BBC***
August 2012
(448 words)

ARE SELF-GUIDED CARS GOING TO DRIVE THE NEXT WAVE OF UNEMPLOYMENT?

The world crossed a significant threshold last week when California passed a law allowing driverless cars to run on state roads from 2015 onwards. If people noticed the event at all, they probably sniffed at another example of Tarzan showing off in the jungle, or space geeks planting new flags on the moon.

But specially adapted hybrids have been driving along roads for several years now. To date, they have logged 300,000 miles with only one accident (when a human-controlled car ran into one of them), while 50,000 of those miles were run without a human having to take the wheel.

Companies intend to bring autonomous vehicles to the market in five years, pointing out they would be significantly safer than driver-controlled ones, as most of the 40,000 people killed every year on American roads are victims of human error. Furthermore, too many people are unsatisfied with the current transport system. They may be handicapped, blind, too young or too old to drive, or intoxicated after late-night partying. Manual operation of cars remains inefficient, and autonomous vehicles would make better use of both roads and car parks.

Engineers have demonstrated that with smart software and an array of sensors, a machine can perform sophisticated, complex tasks most of us assumed would always require human capabilities. And that means our assumptions about what machines can and cannot do are urgently in need of updating. For example, economists are increasingly puzzled by the fact that even after the US recession officially ended, job-creation is much lower than expected. Economic theory says that when companies begin to become profitable, they buy equipment and hire workers. Today, companies are still buying machines, but they're not employing workers.

So where did the jobs go? As you'd expect from economists, there are lots of theories. The most intriguing explanation has been offered by MIT academics in *Race Against the Machine*. Their view is that advances in computing of the kind embodied by the self-driving car represent the next wave of job-eliminating technology. Many skills that were considered to be our pride and joy (such as driving) might soon become worthless, at least in the job market.

In fact, Moore's law, which states that computing power doubles every 18 months, implies that even complex forms of intelligence can ultimately be replaced by massive processing power.

And as for sceptics who think driverless cars are too anodyne to appeal to most motorists, there is the uncomfortable fact that we're driving less, year after year. Costs drain the romance from cruising. And young people are not lusting to own cars like they used to in the post-war Cadillac era portrayed in *American Graffiti*.

Adapted from ***The Observer***
October 2012
(460 words)

Anglais - Texte 10

ARE WE ALONE IN THE UNIVERSE?

Nasa's *Curiosity*, the rover now on Mars, may find evidence for creatures that lived early in Martian history; firm evidence for even the most primitive bugs would have huge import. But what really fuels popular imagination is the prospect of advanced life – the "aliens" familiar from science fiction – and nobody expects a complex biosphere in those locations.

Suppose, however, we widen our gaze beyond our solar system. Astronomers have learnt that other stars have planets circling round them. The data provided by Nasa's *Kepler* spacecraft already reveals thousands of such planets. But we'd really like to see them directly – not just their shadows – and that's hard. To realise just how hard, suppose an alien astronomer with a powerful telescope was viewing Earth. Our planet would seem a pale blue dot, very close to a star (our sun) that outshines it many billion times. But if the hypothetical aliens could detect Earth, they could learn quite a bit about it. They could get information of the length of days, seasons, topography and climate.

We know too little about how life began on Earth to lay confident odds about finding advanced life somewhere else. It may have involved a fluke so rare that it happened only once in the entire galaxy. On the other hand, it may have been almost inevitable, given the right environment. In the next two decades we can expect progress in understanding the biochemistry of life's origins: this is one of the great unsolved problems, which is crucial in guiding astronomers on how and where to search for alien life.

Even if simple life is common, it is, of course, a separate question whether it's likely to evolve into anything intelligent or complex. Indeed, evolutionists don't agree on how divergently our own biosphere could have developed if ice ages and meteorite impacts had happened differently. If, for instance, the dinosaurs hadn't been wiped out, the chain of mammalian evolution that led to humans might have been prevented and it's not clear whether another species would have taken our role.

Advanced life must be rare. Many stars are a billion years older than our sun. Life, were it common, would have had a head start around these more ancient stars. So why haven't aliens already come here? There is substance to this argument. However, we mustn't be too anthropomorphic: some advanced life could be unimaginably different from that on Earth. Others could be living contemplative lives, doing nothing to reveal their presence.

We may learn in the coming decades whether biological evolution is unique to the pale blue dot in the cosmos that is our home, or whether Darwin's writ runs through a wider universe that teems with life – even with intelligence.

Adapted from ***The Guardian***
September 2012
(453 words)

AS INDIA'S ECONOMY GROWS, SO DOES ITS GARBAGE

The garbage trucks regularly line up for hours here outside Bangalore's last official landfill, their burdens putrefying in the afternoon sun. A stinking mountain of trash, the landfill has been poisoning local waters and sickening nearby villagers. Another landfill was in even worse shape before it closed recently after violent protests.

Bangalore, the capital of the modern Indian economy and home to many of its high-technology workers, is drowning in its own waste. Trash is India's plague. It chokes rivers, scars meadows, contaminates streets and nurtures a vast and dangerous ecosystem of rats, mosquitoes, stray dogs, monkeys and pigs. Perhaps even more than the fitful electricity and chaotic traffic, the ubiquitous garbage demonstrates the incompetence of Indian governance and the dark side of the country's rapid economic growth. Greater wealth has spawned more garbage, and the managers of the country's pell-mell development have been unable to handle the load, even in the cities Indians prize the most and look to as their models for the future.

"Bangalore used to be India's cleanest city," said Amiya Kumar Sahu, president of the National Solid Waste Association of India. "Now, it's the filthiest."Bangalore's garbage crisis grew directly out of its stunning success. Technology companies started settling in Bangalore in the 1980s. As they grew, many created pristine campuses hacked out of urban chaos, supplying their own electricity, water, transportation and a rare sense of tranquility. But the dirty secret of those campuses where the companies'executives built mansions is that they had nowhere to put their trash. Many hired truckers to take the mess out of the city, careful not to ask where it went. The truckers found empty lots or willing farmers and simply dumped their loads. The city soon followed the companies'lead. "We never followed scientific landfill practices," Rajneesh Goel, Bangalore's chief civil servant, said in an interview. "All that ground water contamination is going to come to us; more than 300 of our lakes are already gone. The problem is getting out of hand, and eventually it will swallow us up."

Few expect the Bangalore municipal government to solve the problem itself. Instead a network of nonprofit groups has sprung up to conceive and implement recycling projects across the city, and those groups have embraced the thousands of rag pickers who daily paw through the city's garbage to retrieve valuable refuse like paper, glass and certain plastics. For that system to work, however, households in Bangalore must separate their trash into wet food waste, dry recyclables like plastics and paper, and medical waste. The city tries to persuade residents to do just that.

"The city is at its knees," said Kaplana Kar, the city's waste management advisor, "we don't have a choice."

Adapted from ***The New York Times***
October 2012
(457 words)

Anglais - Texte 12

ATTENTION DISORDER OR NOT, PILLS TO HELP IN SCHOOLS

When Dr. Anderson hears about his low-income patients struggling in elementary school, he usually gives them a taste of some powerful medicine.

The pills boost focus and impulse control in children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity disorder. Although A.D.H.D is the diagnosis Dr. Anderson makes, he calls the disorder "made up" and "an excuse" to prescribe the pills to treat what he considers the children's true ill — poor academic performance in inadequate schools.

It is not yet clear whether Dr. Anderson is representative of a widening trend. But some experts note that as wealthy students abuse stimulants to raise already-good grades in colleges and high schools, the medications are being used on low-income elementary school children with faltering grades and parents eager to see them succeed.

Dr. Anderson's instinct is that of a social justice thinker who is evening the scales a little bit. The children he sees with academic problems are essentially mismatched with their environment. Because their families can rarely afford behavior-based therapies like tutoring and family counseling, medication becomes the most reliable and pragmatic way to redirect the student toward success.

Some experts see little harm in a responsible physician using A.D.H.D. medications to help a struggling student. Others fear that doctors are exposing children to unwarranted physical and psychological risks. Reported side effects of the drugs have included growth suppression, increased blood pressure and, in rare cases, psychotic episodes.

The disorder, which is characterized by severe inattention and impulsivity, is an increasingly common psychiatric diagnosis among American youth. The reported prevalence of the disorder has risen steadily for more than a decade, with some doctors gratified by its widening recognition but others fearful that the diagnosis and the drugs to treat it are handed out too loosely and at the exclusion of non-pharmaceutical therapies.

The Drug Enforcement Administration classifies these medications as Schedule II Controlled Substances because they are particularly addictive. Long-term effects of extended use are not well understood, said many medical experts. Some of them worry that children can become dependent on the medication well into adulthood, long after any A.D.H.D. symptoms can dissipate.

Dr. Anderson says that every child he treats with A.D.H.D. medication has met qualifications and if the school had other ideas they would implement them, but the other ideas cost money and resources compared to meds.

He adds that they might not know the long-term effects, but they do know the short-term costs of school failure, which are real. He says that he is looking to the individual person and where they are right now. He sees himself as the doctor for the patient, not for society.

Adapted from ***The New York Times***
October 2012
(445 words)

BAD MEDICINE

Patients want drugs to be safe. But even in supposedly well-run health systems, they can be useless or deadly. No one knows exactly what share of medicines are fake, ill-made, stolen or diverted.

But bad pharma is a global problem, which national drug-safety agencies are struggling to contain. It particularly afflicts countries where officials are bribable, health systems lax and consumers desperate. In Nigeria, Africa's largest market for medicines, a survey by the World Health Organization, in 2011 found that 64% of antimalarial drugs were fake. Over 70% of drugs consumed in Nigeria are imported from India and China, widely seen as the biggest source of fakes.

Salesmen have peddled worthless cures for millennia. But the 21st century is a golden age for bad drugs. Price pressure encourages even well-intentioned firms to cut corners. For criminals, fake pharma is lucrative and the penalties are usually low. Indeed the drug-supply chain is a cheat's paradise. Raw materials come from one place and are processed into active ingredients in another. Manufacturing and packaging may be separate. Before reaching the dispensary, the drug passes through distribution chains and may be re-packaged. This creates a regulatory nightmare. In the case of Heparin, a contaminated blood thinner that killed 149 American people in 2008, Chinese suppliers replaced the main ingredient with a cheaper dangerous substance that still passed authentication tests. This year, Avastin, a cancer medicine, hopped from Turkey to Britain to America through a Canadian online pharmacy: it was fake and contained no active ingredient.

Some international operations are led to stem the scourge. The latest raids involved 100 countries and shut down over 18,000 online pill-pushers. Yet most international efforts are moving slowly. For years governments and companies have talked about "track-and-trace" systems to identify and authenticate medicine. Though the technology exists, countries cannot agree what to use. Different firms hawk their own schemes; regulators disagree about what to track.

So individual states are taking their own steps. Nigeria has spearheaded an impressive counterattack which has brought the share of fake medicine from half to a tenth in 5 years. One means is TruScan, a cheap hand-held spectroscope that allows officials to spot fakes at the point of import. China has staged big seizures of fakes (detaining 2,000 people in August). It executed its top drug-official in 2007 for approving untested medicine in exchange for bribes. America's Food and Drug Administration, FDA has steadily reached abroad. Since 2008, it has opened offices in China, India, South Africa, Mexico, Belgium and many other countries.
A recent law sets higher penalties for counterfeiters and allocates more money to the agency to inspect more factories overseas. But even the FDA admits it cannot police the world's drug supply alone.

Adapted from ***The Economist***
October 2012
(456 words)

BIAS PERSISTS FOR WOMEN OF SCIENCE

Science professors at American universities widely regard female undergraduates as less competent than male students with the same accomplishments and skills, a new study by researchers at Yale University concluded. As a result, the report found, the professors were less likely to offer the women a job. And even if they were willing to offer a job, the salary was lower. The bias was pervasive, the scientists said, and probably reflected subconscious cultural influences rather than overt or deliberate discrimination. Female professors were just as biased against women students as their male colleagues, and biology professors just as biased as physics professors, even though more than half of biology majors are women, whereas men far outnumber women in physics.

Nancy Hopkins, a professor of biology at the M.I.T., who has long talked about continuing barriers to women in science, described the study as "enormously important." Dr. Hopkins said that small slights, accumulated over the course of a career, slowed many women of science. "They don't have the confidence level to get to the top," she said. "They're getting undercut. People tend to think that the problem has gone away, but alas, it hasn't."

Discussions of gender bias in science and mathematics have long been complicated by a host of factors including whether women receive preferential treatment through affirmative action or whether innate differences indeed exist between men and women. To avoid such complications, the Yale researchers sought to design the simplest study possible. They contacted professors in the biology, chemistry and physics departments at six major research universities – three private and three public, unnamed in the study – and asked them to evaluate, as part of a study, an application from a recent graduate seeking a position as a laboratory manager.

All of the professors received the same one-page summary, which portrayed the applicant as promising but not stellar. But in half of the descriptions, the mythical applicant was named John and in half the applicant was named Jennifer. About 30 percent of the professors (127 in all) responded. On a scale of 1 to 7, with 7 being highest, professors gave John an average score of 4 for competence and Jennifer 3.3. John was also seen more favorably as someone they might hire for their laboratories or would be willing to mentor. The average starting salary offered to Jennifer was $26,000. To John it was $30,000 and the bias had no relation to the professor's age, sex, teaching field or tenure status.

Dr. Handelsman said previous studies had shown similar subconscious bias in other occupations. But when she discussed the concerns with other scientists, many responded that scientists would rise above it because they were trained to analyze objective data rationally.

Adapted from ***the New York Times***
September 2012
(457 words)

BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU MORE CLOSELY THAN EVER

Most people have no idea how advanced the technology has become. Now faces can be tracked from half a mile away. Thanks to software called Intelligence Pedestrian Surveillance, cameras are capable of facial recognition, facial comparison and even 'gait analysis', to spot people walking suspiciously.

This is a profoundly disturbing trend. To understand how we got to this state you need to hark back to February 12, 1993 – a landmark moment that transformed the relationship between surveillance and individual liberty.
The police released a blurry CCTV image of a trusting toddler taking a stranger by the hand and being led out of a Liverpool shopping centre. That was two-year-old Jamie Bulger, whose body had been found on a railway track.
This was seen as a huge and very welcome breakthrough in policing. Although the camera did not prevent the crime, its images helped the police find the two boys who were later convicted of his murder.

We now have as many as two million cameras in Britain. That is one for every 30 people. It is said that on any given day in a city centre, the average person is likely to be spotted by CCTV 300 times.

Cameras deployed in airports, railway stations and outside government buildings are an important part of counter-terrorism strategy.
Increasingly, however, as with other forms of surveillance, it is local authorities that are most keen to pry into our lives.

Big Brother Watch, a group set up to challenge policies that threaten our civil liberties, and to expose the true scale of the surveillance state, reported recently that 100,000 cameras are in use in schools – and astonishingly as many as 200 inside toilets and changing rooms.

Yet the proportion of crimes actually solved by cameras is believed to be low. So, are cameras the most cost-effective and efficient means of crime prevention?
Money that might have been spent on street lighting or bobbies on the beat is thrown at technology.
And, of course, many criminals hide their faces to avoid recognition.

For the most part, the public appears to support cameras – while having little idea of how much they are being filmed.
Most cameras are installed without public consultation. There are few rules about where they are placed, who can operate them and what happens to the images stored.
And it is extremely difficult for any citizen to get hold of any images taken of them or to discover whether they have since been destroyed or still exist.

Britain has become one of the most watched-over societies in the world. Do we really want to be monitored round-the-clock, wherever we are?

Adapted from ***Mail Online***
October 2012
(447 words)

Anglais - Texte 16

BRITISH CLIMBERS RELIVE ORDEAL OF « LAST GREAT CLIMB » IN HIMALAYAS

While Great Britain was excelling at the London Olympics, Sandy Allan, 57, and Rick Allen, 59, were suffering exhaustion, hunger and frostbite in conquering a ridge on Nanga Parbat.

Sandy Allan and his climbing partner Rick Allen were at their last camp below the summit of Nanga Parbat, the world's ninth highest mountain, when they gathered together the food they had left. After 14 days on the vast unclimbed Mazeno Ridge – the longest in the Himalayas – it amounted to a packet of McVitie's Digestives biscuits. A lighter they had taken with them had stopped working, its flint worn through. The only spare, they realised, was in the pocket of another member of the team who, exhausted and demoralised, had already decided to descend.

The consequence was that they could not light their stove to boil snow for water, essential on the world's highest mountains where the consequence of dehydration is the risk of frostbite and pulmonary and cerebral oedema. They hoped, however, that they could reach the summit and descend the imposing Diamir Face in a day and a half; they were counting on fixed ropes left by other expeditions. In reality, it took them three full days to get down from the summit without any food or water, a lengthy struggle through deep snow at the limits of survival.

Even with the most optimistic assumptions – planning for eight days' food and fuel they thought they could stretch to 10 – the climb took 18 days with seven different camp and bivouac sites, some of them no more than snow holes. "We didn't think it would take 18 days". The other four team members would become exhausted and "discouraged" by the scale of the ridge, electing to descend before the final ascent.

In the midst of the Olympics, the achievement of the two men in climbing the ridge dubbed the "last great problem of the Himalayas" passed almost unnoticed. In the months that followed, it has become recognised as the most impressive British ascent on an 8,000m peak in a generation.

Now that their story can be told in full for the first time, it is even more remarkable, not least because of their ages: Allan was 57 and Rick Allen 59 when they made their climb.

First explored by British mountaineer Albert Mummery, who died on the mountain in 1895, Nanga Parbat became the focus of German and Austrian climbers between the first and second world wars and after 1945; it was finally conquered by Hermann Buhl in 1953.

"It had always inspired me," said Allan.

Among those who praised the ascent was climber Doug Scott who described it as an "incredible achievement".

Adapted from ***The Observer***
November 2012
(456 words)

CHILD OBESITY: WHY DO PARENTS LET THEIR KIDS GET FAT?

The health risks for obese children may be even greater than previously estimated, new research suggests. So why do parents let their children get fat?

The recent start of the new school year was greeted with reports of a dramatic rise in demand for extra-large uniforms for primary school pupils. Just over 33% of 11-year-olds are now overweight or obese and among four and five-year-olds it's 22%, according to figures from the Child Measurement Programme, which assesses the height and weight of primary school children in England.

New research published today by the University of Oxford also suggests that obese children and adolescents have several risk factors for heart disease, including raised blood pressure and cholesterol, compared with normal weight children.

Obesity experts say parents are struggling with a multitude of problems when it comes to their child's weight. They range from a lack of education about food, limited cooking skills and limited money to buy healthier food to longer working hours and marketing campaigns for junk food aimed at kids. But the more sedentary lives children now lead is also creating huge problems. Last week a study suggested that up to 75% of junior school children preferred to stay at home than go to their nearby park. Watching TV was one of the most popular activities, with 89% saying it was how they liked best to spend their time away from school, according to researchers. In July, scientists from University of Montreal claimed every extra hour of television that a toddler watches each week adds to their waist size by the time they turn 10.

While the problems parents face might be increasing so is evidence about the dangers of obesity. However, despite the rise in child obesity, experts say it's wrong to just blame parents. "They definitely have a responsibility, but the issue is much broader than simply blaming them," says Paul Gately, professor of exercise and obesity at Leeds Metropolitan University. Many parents don't realise their child is fat when it might be obvious to other people, he says.

According to studies, 75% of parents underestimated the size of an overweight child, while 50% underestimated the size of an obese child. Even more surprisingly, a similar study of healthcare professions produced nearly the same results.

The expert's view is that despite all the talk about tackling child obesity, the reality is there is very little professional help out there. Most dietetic services will not see obese kids because they don't think they can be effective. They know losing weight is about more than just the diet. We clearly need an approach that combines diet, exercise, education and psychological support.

Adapted from ***BBC News Magazine***
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(455 words)

Anglais - Texte 18

CHILDREN OF SYRIA BADLY TRAUMATISED

Children from war-torn Syria are being badly traumatised from witnessing killings, torture and other atrocities in the country's conflict, a charity has warned.

Harrowing testimony collected from refugees in the "Save the Children" charity projects reveals that youngsters have been the target of brutal attacks, seen the deaths of parents, siblings and other children, and have witnessed and experienced torture.

The charity is working to help children come to terms with the devastating mental scarring of their experiences, providing specialists' support to those showing signs of distress including self-harm, nightmares and bedwetting.

The aid agency is also calling for the United Nations to step up its documentation of all violations of children's rights in Syria and that it should have more resources to do this, so that crimes against children are not committed with impunity.

Save the Children's chief executive, said: "No child should ever see the horrors being described on a daily basis to our staff on the ground; stories of torture, murder and terror. They need specialists' emotional support to come to terms with these shocking experiences and their stories need to be heard and documented so those responsible for these appalling crimes against children can be held to account."

The charity has released Untold Atrocities, a collection of first-hand accounts of the conflict from children and parents receiving help from Save the Children after fleeing Syria.

The accounts contain graphic details of how children are caught up in Syria's war: witnessing massacres and, in some cases, experiencing torture.

"Dead bodies along with injured people were scattered all over the ground. I found body parts all over each other. Dogs were eating the dead bodies for two days after the massacre" a14 year-old youngster told a member of the charity.

"This six-year-old boy was tortured more than anyone else in that room. He only survived for three days and then he simply died," said another 15 year-old boy.

Even though Save the Children is providing specialist help to children to recover from their experiences, they have been refused permission to enter Syria to help more children. Much of the children's testimony, however, corroborates violations documented by the United Nations and human rights organisations in recent months. A lot of children have indeed started self-harming as they struggle to come to terms with what they have been through.

Save the Children is on the ground on Syria's borders, providing emotional support to thousands of children who have fled to neighbouring countries, helping them recover from their experiences and rebuild their lives. The agency has launched an appeal to help fund its work in the region.

Adapted from ***The Independent***
September 2012
(441 words)

CLOSED DRUG TRIALS LEAVE PATIENTS AT RISK AND DOCTORS IN THE DARK

This week, Daily Telegraph readers have been astonished by revelations about the incompetent regulation of implantable medical devices. This paper has clearly demonstrated that patients are put at risk, because of flawed and absent legislation. But many of these issues apply even more widely to the regulation of all medicines, and at the core is a scandal that has been shamefully ignored by politicians.

The story is simple: drug companies can hide information about their drugs from doctors and patients, perfectly legally, with the help of regulators. While industry and politicians deny the existence of this problem, it is widely recognised within medical academia, and meticulously well-documented. The current best estimate is that half of all drug trials never get published.

The Government has spent an estimated £500 million stockpiling Tamiflu, a medicine to help prevent pneumonia and death in case of an avian flu epidemic. But the manufacturer continues to withhold vitally important information on trials of this drug from Cochrane Library, the universally respected authority, which produces gold-standard summaries on medicines for doctors and patients. Nobody in the Department of Health or any regulator has raised a whisper about this.

In fact, while regulators should be helping to inform doctors, and protect patients, in reality they have conspired with companies to withhold information about trials. The European Medicines Agency, which now approves drugs for use in Britain, spent more than three years refusing to hand over information on two widely used weight loss drugs. The agency's excuses were so poor that the European Ombudsman made a finding of maladministration.

Even the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence, plays along with this game. Sometimes chunks of its summary documents on the benefits and risks of drugs are rewritten, because data have only been shared by companies under unethical "confidentiality agreements". The numbers are blacked out in the tables to prevent doctors seeing the benefits from a drug in each trial; and even the names of the trials are blacked out.

Regulators have lacked ambition. Politicians have ignored the issue. Journalists have been scared off by lobbyists. Worst of all, the doctors in medical membership bodies, the Royal Colleges and the Societies, even the patient groups – many of them funded by industry - have let us all down.

This must change. We need muscular legislation to ensure that all information about all trials on all currently used drugs is made available to doctors. We need the members of patient groups and medical bodies to force their leaders to act. And we need EU medicine regulators to be held to public account, for the harm they have inflicted on us.

Adapted from ***The Daily Telegraph***
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(451 words)

Anglais - Texte 20

COCOA – AND YOUR CHOCOLATE FIX – IS UNDER THREAT

The effects of climate change can be seen all around us. Glaciers are shrinking, water levels are changing. The rapid escalation of change paired with very convincing scientific evidence suggests we're causing it. It means we might have a chance at arresting or reversing it.

One area where we're really starting to see the effects of climate change is with global agriculture. Most crops grow within a relatively narrow range of climatic conditions. They need the right amount of rain and sunshine, they need to grow in the right kind of soil, because they've evolved and been bred for very specific conditions. You can't grow bananas in Alaska.

In areas where some crops have traditionally been grown with great success, we're starting to see problems. Crop failures are occurring where they shouldn't and those failures are definitively connected to changes in the climate. What's happening to the cocoa crop in Africa is most certainly linked to climate change. West Africa is a major cocoa producer but it is getting too hot and might not be able to grow it any more unless researchers can develop drought-tolerant plants capable of handling hotter, drier conditions. This raises concerns about reactive breeding and genetic engineering.

Chocolate is also a huge industry, with a number of major companies involved in the transport, processing, and production of chocolate. For west African farmers, the loss of cocoa farms could present serious problems. Those farms were installed in the first place because of the high demand for cocoa in the west, displacing food crops and subsistence farming. Cocoa farming in some regions dates to colonial rule and, as a legacy of colonialism, its decline could have very far-reaching effects. Without cocoa, communities will have trouble supporting themselves, providing employment to residents, feeding themselves and maintaining social order.

Temporary fixes in the order of food aid are often proposed, but those aren't going to solve the larger problem: we are drying Africa out, we are milking it for all the resources we can get, and then we are abandoning the empty husk and letting people fend for themselves. It is a twisted system we have created. Since climate change is heavily influenced by western practices and lifestyles, including pressures on the global south to "develop" in the way we deem appropriate, we must tie environmental justice in with the larger picture of colonialism, food security and traditional ways of life under threat. This isn't just about handing aid to Africa or providing assistance. Cocoa farms were built at our demand to cater for our hunger for chocolate, and now that they are facing a very real crisis, we need to examine our role in the development of that crisis.

Adapted from ***The Guardian***
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