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Autumn 1997

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editorial:

this mortal coil

In the famous 'To be, or not to be' soliloquy in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, the title character continues his muse on life and death with the words:

*'To die, to sleep -
No more; and by a sleep to say we end
The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to. 'Tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wished. To die, to sleep;
To sleep, perchance to dream. Ay, there's the rub;
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause.'*

Health professionals are involved with life and death, with sleep and insomnia, with 'the heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks' that occur on 'this mortal coil'. Most of the time we press on, generally doing a good job, but like Hamlet sometimes we must muse. What (if anything) is the meaning of life? What (if anything) takes place after death? 'Ay, there's the rub.'

Triple Helix is a new multidisciplinary magazine which seeks to explore questions like these within the context of healthcare. It launches at a time of two significant anniversaries - the 50th of the Nuremberg Trial verdicts when some Nazi doctors were hanged for medical atrocities, and the 30th since the passing of the UK Abortion Act, since when there have been more than 4,000,000 abortions.

This edition takes a hard look at suffering, considers the potential for cloning humans (no longer the stuff of science fiction), and reviews a proposed update of the Hippocratic Oath. *Among All Nations* gives an international perspective right at the heart of the magazine, appropriately reflecting the professions' global responsibilities as the jet and the Net make the world ever smaller.

Triple Helix is Christian, in a quietly confident way. We don't have all the answers, but we believe we have better answers (and better focused questions?) than any other health magazine on the market. We hope you enjoy considering the Christian dimensions in healthcare. We hope it helps 'give us pause'.

Andrew Fergusson