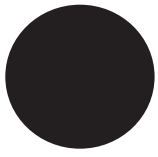


EDITORS' NOTE



To Protect & Cure



For more than two millennia, physicians have been healing patients—pledging to protect and cure under the terms set forth by the oath Hippocrates crafted nearly 500 years before Christ.

Today, doctors have at their disposal methods of diagnosis and treatment unparalleled in the history of mankind. We can cure blindness, scan the brain and operate on a beating heart. And yet, there has never been such disparity between the care that is possible and the care that most people on earth receive. How our medicine is distributed—the treatment and personnel necessary to deliver it—is one of the greatest challenges facing the world today. The challenges are scientific, political, social, religious and economic—after all, healthy people are happier and more productive, and the benchmark of a successful society.

To explore these issues, we first turned to a panel of specialists, asking them to

respond to our Big Question—“What is the most pressing global health crisis, and how can it be solved?” We then took a close look at tuberculosis in “Anatomy of a Pandemic.” Once thought to be almost eradicated, today TB is sweeping the planet; our infographic explains why. For two personal messages, we asked Qanta Ahmed, an Islamic physician who has practiced everywhere from Saudi Arabia to London to New York’s suburbs, to examine the challenge of the Muslim faith and the rise of extremism in medicine. John M. Barry, award winning author and influenza expert, chronicles the impact of pandemics and the failure of our last response to the flu. In our Map Room, we document how Dhaka, one of the world’s most crowded and disease-ridden cities, copes with its sick and ailing.

To paint a broad portrait of health care around the globe, we identified three nations that deliver health care at dramatically different per capita expenditures each year—India with less than \$30, Brazil at \$300 and France at \$3,000. Sandhya Srinivasan in Mumbai, Jeb Blount in Rio de Janeiro and Hala Kodmani in Paris ponder the state of medicine in these countries from a consumer’s point of view. From London, Paula Park weighs in with an investigation into the dark world of counterfeit drugs and the distributors who prey on the least advantaged and most desperately ill. Public health and sanitation—especially their absence or abuse—are significant contributors to health crises, so Frankie Freeman describes Ghana, a nation that should be one of Africa’s success stories but is not. Finally, for our Conversation, we turn to Dr. Sam Zaramba, Uganda’s veteran health minister and chairman of the executive committee of the World Health Organization, who has his own quite pointed perspective on a host of challenges facing health professionals and consumers.

On other subjects, while the Israeli blockade focuses attention on Gaza, Eman Mohammed, a 22-year-old self-taught Palestinian photographer, offers a compelling portfolio of one family. In Tokyo, Jake Adelstein, an American who’s devoted his life to examining the Japanese underworld, has uncovered a dark tale of the yakuza gangs and their deep ties to the top ranks of the nation’s political elite. In the northern Caucasus, two Columbia University researchers paid their second visit to Abkhazia since the war between Georgia and Russia two years ago, bringing back a startling profile of a region struggling over questions of nationhood. And Megha Bahre takes us to the front lines of a brutal proxy war in India’s interior, waged by Maoist insurgents and corrupt police.

Finally, amid all this turmoil, editor David A. Andelman offers his Coda, examining Turkey—increasingly a key player in the Middle East drama and the Gaza blockade—a nation trapped between East and West, searching for its place in the new international order.

—*The Editors*