Don't patronise students

As a Project 2000 student now entering the branch programme, I feel very disillusioned. So much emphasis is put on patient 'assessment' but do mentors and tutors ever assess their students in the same manner?

We give the patient the courtesy of obtaining their history, so why don't mentors and tutors give students the same rights rather than assuming that they are no more than large children or inept adults?

It begs the question whether mentors and tutors are not trained in the skills required to assist students in their studies or if they are so pushed that they have neither the time nor the inclination to do so. As a student I want to be taught but not patronised.

A Cardiff student

Harvesting sperm constitutes assault

I am glad I am not the only person disturbed by the harvesting of sperm from a comatose patient (Letters November 13).

Had this been a situation involving the impregnation of a comatose female I am sure there would have been a furore supported by all members of the nursing and medical professions.

My belief is that this action constituted an assault on the individual involved. If the law allows this, it is guilty of complicity in the perpetration of a crime.

For the sake of those professionals associated with this case, and to create a precedent for any future cases, this must be legally tested. However sympathetic we are to the family, we must not allow open contravention of the law in our workplace.

Peter Callery
University of Manchester

Night shift problems will be made worse

I was concerned to read of the proposed challenge by Unison, with support from the RCN, if the government fails to implement the European working time directive (News November 20).

I am certainly not a supporter of internal rotation, and agree that no nurse should be forced to work excessive hours. I fail to see, however, how night staff working no more than eight hours in a 24-hour period would benefit anyone. The night staff would have to work more nights, to meet their contracted hours and to make up their wages (as at the Norfolk and Norwich Health Care Trust, reported over recent weeks).

Day staff would then have only eight hours rest between shifts on some occasions, rather than the stipulated eleven. This could also mean that an 'early' shift might start as early as 6am. Nurses have problems already with child care and travel arrangements for a 7am start. Starting earlier could prove impossible. The same problems would apply if nurses were required to work until 10pm at night.

We already have problems in relation to shift systems. Please don't make them worse!

Helen Eady
York

Belt up and feel more comfortable

I was angered by your letter from Bryn Maidment (November 13) in which he supported the ridiculous banning of uniform belts by the Ipswich Hospital on safety grounds. Mr Maidment describes himself as a 'safety consultant'. I presume, therefore, that he is not a nurse and certainly has no practical experience of nursing while wearing a...