Worry for diploma students

I am a diploma nursing student and due to complete my course in 1999, and then quickly upgrade to degree level later that year.

I read with interest your article regarding the changes proposed in nurse education (News April 23). I agree that nursing should become a degree only profession and I believe that Project 2000 was the final step on that road.

But what concerns me is will the diploma students become the 'SR/ENs' of the future? This may cause bitter resentment from nurses who have not only converted but also those that have studied at diploma level.

I would hope that any changes proposed are fully discussed, and explained to nursing generally, as a huge leap towards greater professionalism.

Mark Carroll
Northumberland

Follow UKCC guidelines on accepting gifts

I am in agreement with the management of the trust which sacked a district nurse after she received a bequest from a patient in a will (News Analysis May 7). Guidelines from the UKCC were written for a purpose and should be followed and observed by nurses in the profession. Her case has raised several issues.

A question of giving a gift could denote 'thank you' in verbal and non-verbal expression. Acceptance of gifts can have a slightly different connotation.

Community nursing is based on continuity of care and long-standing relationships – and from these, nurses are aware of the financial status and life history of the patients and vice-versa. Thus the objectivity of treating all patients equally could be lost due to 'emotional' attachment to a particular patient.

Another view is that not all nurses are 'angels of mercy'. By knowing the patient's true financial position and his or her vulnerability, nurses are in a position to exploit the emotional state of patients in their care.

There are a lot of elderly lonely people, with sufficient assets and without any relatives living in the community. Equally, vulnerable and lonely patients could be cultivating the friendship of nurses for their own motives.

S Teoh
Kent

Young people not more likely to spit

We write with regard to the letter you published about spitting (Letters April 23). The writer suggests that young people are particularly likely to spit.

My brother and I do not believe this. We agree that spitting is a bad habit, but we find the writer's suggestion sad when she says that younger people are especially responsible for it.

Many young people are concerned about the environment and people’s health, and we believe that we all have a responsibility to avoid such bad habits.

Madeleine Gunner (13) and Joseph Gunner (11)
North Yorkshire

Choosing shifts is good for patients

Francis Wheatley’s response to Christopher Hunn’s article, 'The rhythm of life' (Art & Science April 23), was interesting in that she had to leave hospital work for a nursing home to be able to work shifts that suited her. It seems internal rotation works to the benefit of management, but to the detriment of patients and workers.

I also work night duty in a nursing home. We have a set rota, with the staff, as far as possible, being able to work the nights they want. This is good for morale and makes for low staff turnover, which benefits our patients.

Jenny Faiz
Hereford and Worcester

Recalling the trauma of war

A recent letter to the Radio Times rightly praised the nurses of the First World War as portrayed in Channel 4’s The Roses of No-Man’s Land, but alleged that the nurses interviewed did not speak about the trauma they had suffered because ‘people seem to have been made of sterner stuff in those days’. That is not so. The reason those nurses never spoke of ‘trauma’ was because the word had not become part of everyday speech.

Having met women who served as nurses during that war, I can assure you that they recall the horrors, and the trauma remains with them. And they have nothing but strong interest and admiration for today’s nurses, once they have experienced their care.

Faced with similar circumstances, today’s young people would perform just as well, and there would still be people who complained and rubbed their efforts.

D French
Bristol

Do pushchairs cause social unrest?

One of many probable causes of violence and social unrest among young people could be due to the use of the front facing pushchair.

When the pram was the most popular way to transport children, the child faced the person pushing, and there would be well recognised interchanges of looks, words and rapport. Not now. Now the child sits facing the world with just a voice from an unseen source above. Can anyone doubt that these experiences could have left their mark?

T Galligan
Northamptonshire