It's not as if we've got anything better to do...

One area of the media that is genuinely concerned about nursing issues – our friends at the Daily Mail – gleefully reports on 'the squalor' in the NHS and asks nurses to 'end the scandal of Britain's Third World Wards.'

As a collective professional group we are also being urged to take our complaints and suggestions for change 'straight to the top.' Any idea which focuses so closely on time management should be given priority, I suppose.

Stephen Weeks
West Yorkshire

Protect yourself but leave restraint to the police

I agree with John Southcote's overall premise that training in breakaway skills gives nurses some physical techniques to protect themselves and that this does not preclude them from using physical means of self-protection (Opinion March 22).

However, from personal experience of such training and its implementation, I have serious concerns about further escalation of potentially fatal situations for the practitioner, attacker and other clients.

My breakaway training taught me traditional techniques as well as wrist locks and restraint holds which are adapted from martial arts techniques. As a practising martial artist myself, these modifications have only watered down established techniques, rendering them less effective in controlling an attacker.

To establish control, there needs to be at least two members of staff trained in these techniques working as a team. Should this prove successful, nurses risk the possibility of solving one problem only to create another. Although the threat of imminent violence is under control, nurses involved in restraint are unable to meet the needs of other patients in their care until they are freed by a staff member or the police. This might be seen as neglect and could potentially result in client fatality. Restraint is a matter best left to the police.

Paul Brown
Manchester

Join me in complaining about £20,000 average

I endorse the comments made about the new NHS campaign (Letters March 22). Surely someone has to be accountable for producing this seemingly fictitious 'average nurse earning' figure of £20,000?

According to the new list of earnings and clinical grades, only those nurses at the top of F grade will receive over £20,000. Since the vast majority of the workforce is made up from the lower grades, I am still puzzled about how this figure is reached.

Those of us who can only dream of reaching £20,000 are sickened every time we see these adverts. Join me in writing to the Advertising Standards Authority and the Independent Television Commission to investigate the matter fully. People will only wake up to this farce if enough of us complain.

Independent Television Commission
33 Foley Street
London
W1P 7LB
email: publicaffairs@itc.org.uk

Advertising Standards Authority
Complaints Department
2 Torrington Place
London WC1E 7HW

Peter Jeffery
by email

We don't want a superior, self-centred workforce

The views expressed by Christine Hancock (Features March 29) have done a disservice to many long serving nurses. She describes them as subservient members of staff with little confidence. In her view, there appears nothing for nurses but to get a diploma or degree. The focus on diploma/degree practitioners, as a means of trying to catch up with the elite, privately educated, university graduates from the top socio-economic group (doctors), referred to as the nursing workforce of the future, is a frightening thought.

Many of our peers have no higher academic qualifications, but they aspire to keep ahead in their fields of practice. Once we lose them, nursing will run for the BBC to accept it, although in fairness they almost always do.

As nursing adviser I am aware of both the opportunities to champion nursing, and the limitations of the role, which is determined by the need to provide entertainment for the 10 million viewers who tune in each week. I am proud of my association with Holby City and will continue to work with the BBC to seek to promote our profession in a positive and realistic light.

Brian Dolan
Nursing adviser, Holby City

Nurses were quite right to express concern at a UKCC roadshow about an episode of Holby City that showed two nurses discussing their private lives over a patient (News March 29).

As nursing adviser to the show, I comment on the scripts and occasionally attend the set to show actors specific nursing techniques. However it is the director of each episode, not the advisers, who calls the shots when it comes to stage directions, even if it does not reflect optimal practice.

Advisers are there to offer advice but it is not obligatory for the BBC to accept it, although in fairness they almost always do.

TV director calls the shots, not the advisers