



Twelfth Night

I hope you have all survived the festivities relatively unscathed. Rather fewer domestic disasters in the Gregory household to report than usual – only one broken set of tree lights, a leaking toilet cistern on Christmas Eve betrayed by a damp stain on the kitchen ceiling, a dead printer (desktop!), and a flat tyre on the family car.

If, like me, you have to fight the urge to hibernate, as an antidote I recommend you (re-)read *Metal Jam: the Story of a Diabetic* (sic) by Teresa McLean. The author was *eventually* diagnosed with insulin-dependent diabetes in 1973, and her account of some of the medical care she received around the country over the next twelve years is cringeworthy. Her description of the manifold guises of severe hypoglycaemia should be mandatory reading for anyone providing care for people with diabetes. It challenges the simplistic assumption that education is the solution to diabetic emergencies. There is a snag – the book has been out of print for a long time, but copies are available via internet retailers, and are well worth seeking out.

The general election will be held on 7th May. You may find the King's Fund Health and Social Care Election Tracker <http://election.kingsfund.org.uk> helpful in deciding where to place your cross on the ballot paper. There should be agreement between the parties when it comes to recommendations about education for people with diabetes in the soon-to-be-published APPG for Diabetes report, but will any of the recommendations find their way into manifestos?

2015 seems set to imitate its illustrious predecessor. The relentlessly high demand for medical admissions over the first weekend saw yet another Major Internal Incident declared; it would be more remarkable if we were told if there wasn't one. SPAs and other luxuries like diabetes in-reach were cancelled, and consultant physicians summoned urgently to wards they did not know existed in order to review (i.e. discharge) patients who had been out lied from the medical base wards. Those who were doing ward rounds anyway were encouraged to do more of them, and faster, because it is a well known fact that the faster consultant physicians, particularly diabetologists and geriatricians, rotate, the more effective and productive they become. Spin doctors indeed! Don't abandon hope just yet though, the Management Consultants are back after their holiday!

Wishing you all a happy and healthy New Year.

Rob Gregory, Leicester, 5 January 2015