

GPs 'turning their backs on healthcare partnerships'

Doctors have slammed the findings of a "highly critical" and "deeply disturbing" report into local healthcare providers.

Audit Scotland, which compiled the report, has called for a fundamental review of Community Health Partnerships (CHPs), sub-divisions of the NHS which provide primary healthcare services broadly along local authority boundaries.

The British Medical Association, the professional body for doctors, said GPs have turned their back on CHPs because they have become "bureaucratic monoliths" which have "spectacularly failed to bridge the gap between health and social care".

There are 36 CHPs managing £3.2 billion on improving community healthcare, but the report found some national health trends are worsening. For example, more older people and those with long-term health problems are being admitted to hospital as emergencies.

And while the number of patients being delayed from leaving hospital had initially dropped, this is now rising.

Dr Dean Marshall, who chairs the BMA's Scottish general practitioners committee, said, "This is a highly critical report which confirms our experience of the management and performance of these organisations.

"It is deeply disturbing that with responsibility for such a significant sum of NHS funding, around £3 billion, and despite the many bureaucrats that work for these organisations, their financial management, strategy and governance is so poor.

"That a CHP cannot say how many staff it has working within its structure, or how much it has spent on administration costs, is beyond belief."

The Scottish Government, NHS and councils need to show stronger shared leadership and support for CHPs to improve people's health and move more services into the community, according to Audit Scotland.

Call for reform

Britain has welcomed Bahrain's decision to lift emergency rule, as tanks and soldiers left the heart of the capital Manama.

But the Foreign Office said the move must be followed by "concrete change and genuine political reform" in the majority-Shia Gulf state which is ruled by a monarchy drawn from the Sunni minority.

Bahrain's authorities invited troops from neighbouring Saudi Arabia to help suppress unrest in March after weeks of pro-democracy demonstrations. Some 30 people have died in relation to the protests. King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa has now called for "unity talks" with protest factions.

Sight boosted by eye changes

People who are deaf from birth develop enhanced sight because of changes to their retinas, scientists have discovered.

The modification gives them better peripheral vision and increases their field of view.

Scientists found that the retinal nerve cells of individuals born deaf, or who went deaf very early in life, are distributed differently from those of hearing adults.

As a result their retinal neurons prioritise the region at the edge of vision, towards the ears.

Previous research suggested that deaf people can see further into the visual periphery than people who hear. However, this was thought to be due to an adaptation in the visual centre of the brain.

The new research, funded by the Royal National Institute for Deaf People, is published today in the online journal Public Library of Science ONE.

From this month the RNID is changing its name to Action on Hearing Loss.



Playing dirty

DIRT3

Codemasters; PS3 (also on Xbox 360 and PC); £49.99;

www.codemasters.co.uk

By George Wright

CODEMASTERS are back to doing what they do best — thrilling the heck out of racers with an action-packed sortie that ticks all the boxes you could ever hope for.

Rallying is back to the fore in DIRT3 with snow-covered tracks, rural roads and miles and miles of white-knuckle racing testing you to the limit as you try to turbo-boost your pro-driver reputation in Europe, Africa and the US.

One of the drawbacks that stuck out like a sore thumb in DIRT2 was the disjointed presentation, but not this time around as the designers have come up trumps — or rather triangles — with a stylish and unique interface that helps you navigate around the game with the minimum of fuss, allowing you to pack in more driving.

It's not just the wrapper that has

improved, though, with racing also tuned up to deliver top-notch driving at break-neck speeds that requires razor-sharp reflexes or it's crash, bang and goodnight!

Familiar events such as Rallycross, Trailblazer and Head 2 Head return and are as good as ever, but the icing on DIRT3's cake is Gymkhana, a brand new freestyle event that's a dead cert to be a fans' favourite.

Car control is the name of the game here with donuts, power-slides, jumps, obstacles and more jaw-dropping tricks than David Blaine. The moves are hard to master, but it's great fun learning.

Add this new attraction to great presentation, superb driving, cracking cars from five decades, new and varied locations, night-time racing, great weather effects and improved AI, and you have yourself a rally good game!

VERDICT: It's a winner.



News Bytes

A 58-year-old woman Anne Muir has become the first person in Scotland to be convicted of illegally sharing music files. The 58-year-old was found guilty of distributing £54,000 of music files via peer-to-peer. That's 7493 music files and 24,242 karaoke files.

Sony hopes to have its PlayStation Network back in action by the weekend. They pulled the plug on the service on April 20 after discovering a cyber attack which led to the personal data of 77 million customers to be compromised.

Google is blaming hackers in China for breaking into the personal Gmail accounts of several hundred people, including senior US government officials, military personnel and political activists. The breach marks the second time Google has publicly identified China as the home for a hacking scheme.

Apple used to claim in their TV ads that Macs didn't get viruses. Well, they can't say that anymore. They have just released a security update for OS X that gets rid of the Mac Defender malware. However, you must have the latest Snow Leopard version, or it won't work. Nice, eh?

Out tomorrow: Hunted: The Demon's Forge (PC, PS3 and Xbox 360, Bethesda), A New Beginning (PC, Lace Mamba Global), Dawn Of Fantasy (Xbox 360, 505 Games), Hellgate (PC online, HanbitSoft), The Sims 3 Generations (Mac and PC, EA).



On air

AirTies 4420-TV

£79.99, Available from www.amazon.co.uk

By Derek Uchman

RECENTLY we've been banging on how Internet-connected TVs are going to revolutionise the way we watch telly.

Most new TVs, set-top boxes and even receivers now come with an Ethernet connection. Trouble is, the chances are your modem or router is across the room or even in a different part of the

house which means trailing lengthy cables. Alternatively, you could use the AirTies 4420-TV.

It consists of two identical black boxes — one plugs into your TV or set-top box, the other into your router. Then press the button on each, and your TV is online. It really is that simple. There's no need to install software on a PC (although if you want to tweak the boxes, there is a utilities disc).



The 4420-TV uses the new(-ish) standard in wireless technology, called 802.11n, which is plenty fast for streaming all your music, photos and high-def movies. In fact, it'll handle anything you throw at it.

However, we would strongly urge you try before you buy, as the 4420-TV's range can be severely

restricted if the signal has to travel through walls.

On the plus side, you can simply daisy-chain extra units, to ensure full coverage throughout you home. Each unit also contains a USB port for external hard drives.

VERDICT: If only networking was always this simple.

