



From the editor

It's August; why aren't you on vacation?

A persistent myth about psychiatrists is that we all take vacations in August:

- Judith Rossner wrote *August*, a successful novel based on the premise that all the psychiatrists left town that month, leaving their patients to their own devices.
- Bill Murray and Richard Dreyfuss starred in the film *What About Bob?*, in which a patient was so distressed to be left alone that he followed his psychiatrist on his August vacation.
- John Katzenbach wrote *The Analyst*, in which a patient plots to kill his psychiatrist/analyst for going on vacation in August.

This August vacation theme seems “anti-psychiatry” to me. It suggests we belong to some cult (Freud took August vacations, so the rest of us do, too), or that we do not care about our patients (or at least fail to provide adequate cross-coverage).

One can test the hypothesis that psychiatrists—compared with the general population—are more likely to take August vacations. Using vacation data from my university department in Cincinnati, I find no evidence that psychiatrists take August vacations more than other physicians do. This small study awaits confirmation by larger-scale epidemiologic studies.

If you're reading this issue of CURRENT PSYCHIATRY in August, you are probably not on vacation. If it's any consolation, most of your colleagues (at least here in Cincinnati) are not on vacation, either.

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