Y2K problem arises from a long-standing and often-used programming practice whereby affected programs use only two digits rather than four to represent years. This may lead to a variety of computer malfunctions and data errors related to crossing from 1999 (99) to 2000 (00). In this setting, software may interpret 00 as 1900 or another incorrect date, or may even "crash", resulting in a loss of service situation. Clinicians may be seriously affected by this problem as it relates to the operation of clinical equipment. As well, business functions such as scheduling, billing and purchasing; the reliability of infrastructure such as power and telecommunications; the availability of supplies; and many other issues, are involved in this nasty problem. In many cases upgrading to the latest software release easily solves the problem. Already, lawsuits have been initiated by individuals who felt that it was unfair to have to pay for fixes to Y2K defects.

References

- 1 Krug EG, Kresnow M, Peddicord JP, et al. Retraction of "Krug EG, Kresnow M, Peddicord JP, et al. Suicide after natural disasters. N Engl J Med 1998; 338: 373-8". N Engl J Med 1999; 340: 148-9.
- 2 Risks Digest. Forum on risks to the public in computers and related systems. <http://catless.ncl.ac.uk/Risks>.
- 3 <http://groucho.med.yale.edu/discussion/anesthesiology/>
- 4 Peterson I. A digital matter of life and death. Science News, 12 March 1988.
- 5 <http://www.fda.gov>
- 6 Anonymous. Year 2000 compliance issues. Health Devices 1999; 28: 104-12.

Erratum

Choi J-H, Rooke GA, Wu S-C, Bishop MJ. Reduction in postintubation respiratory resistance by isoflurane and albuterol. Can J Anaesth 1997; 44: 717-22.

Please note the equation on page 718 (July issue) is incorrect. It should read:

$$P_i = V/C + R_f \text{ and}$$

$$P_e = V/C - R_{Fe}$$