In this special issue of the *Bulletin*, Zunyou Wu & Nicolas Clark (82) introduce the theme of opioid substitution therapy. Sheena Sullivan (83) explains why methadone maintenance programmes are needed. Fiona Fleck interviews Robin Room (91–92) about harm reduction and prohibition of illicit substances. Gary Humphreys (87–88) reports on progress and obstacles to effective opioid substitution therapy in Ukraine. Fumbuka Ng’wanakilala (89–90) describes how the United Republic of Tanzania has launched a national methadone programme to counter heroin use and HIV transmission.

Mubashar Sheikh et al. (84) announce an upcoming theme issue on human resources.