Correspondence

Requirements of equipments and instruments for teaching pharmacology to undergraduates

Sir,

This has reference to views expressed in an editorial by B Gitanjali and in a letter by Srivastava et al in the IJP.

A similar dilemma as expressed by Srivastava et al was faced by us. In this context, I have sent a letter to the Secretary, Medical Council of India (MCI), New Delhi wherein I have given details of equipment vis-a-vis the ‘objectives’ and ‘skills’ needed to be acquired at the end of the course as per the ‘MCI regulations on graduate medical education, 1997’. Through my letter, I have tried to draw MCI’s attention to this anomaly. I am yet to receive a response to my letter which was sent to the MCI in December 2002.

However, hopefully, the ball has been set rolling and if a concerted effort is made we may hope that the list may be corrected / modified.

C. Chauhan
Department of Pharmacology, Terna Medical College, Nerul, Navi Mumbai - 400707, India.

References
1. Gitanjali B. Cutting the foot to fit the shoe. Indian J Pharmacol 2002;34:300.

Reply

The views expressed by Chauhan are very valid. These views hold good for pre and para clinical subjects too. Though I do not want to sound pessimistic, I am not sure whether a single letter would have sufficient impact to initiate changes in the list of equipment proscribed by the MCI. Many more such letters would probably be needed before we see a visible change.

B. Gitanjali
Section Editor - Clinical Pharmacology, IJP. E-mail: batmanabane@vsnl.com

The editorial and its aftermath

Sir,

"Democracy is a state of mind"

– Boutros Boutros Ghali

The flutter of resentment caused by a recent editorial¹ by B. Gitanjali (Section Editor) brings to focus issues of far greater concern than what the editorial actually addressed. I do not think the bitterness is related to pharmacology, not even science. The central issue here is freedom of expression and our ability to tolerate dissent.

The essence of democracy lies in the willingness to appreciate and accommodate dissent, tolerate plurality of opinion and support the freedom of expression. Unfortunately, the unanimous condemnation of the editorial by the executive committee challenges editorial privileges and the freedom of expression.

Is it not an irony of fate that this debate took place at the Constitution Club, New Delhi?

The argument that the editorial was ‘deficient in science and therefore inappropriate’ is weak and untenable. Science is not independent of the scientist and the world he/she lives in. Many reputed journals (including the most technical ones) devote a few pages to the social, cultural and political aspects of science. The most prestigious journals such as Nature and Science are read more often for these pages of general interest than for abstruse technical stuff. I am sure the circulation will improve if IJP includes more such articles.

Editorials/articles such as this could be challenged once again on the question of ‘inappropriate scientific content’. Therefore it is both urgent and important to lay down a comprehensive and explicit editorial policy. And editorial freedom, within the policy framework, should be respected.

My comments are not related to the opinions expressed by the above editorial per se. The 36th Annual Conference was certainly not deficient in scientific content. I often found it difficult to choose between two sessions, both of them equally good. The opening talk by Salvador Moncada was a treat by itself. I also appreciate the decision to schedule the inaugural session during the unobtrusive evening hours, enabling the politically disinterested delegates to have a break.

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Reference

Time for change: Preconference workshop, annual conference and IJP

Sir,

After reading a few thought-provoking articles in the Indian Journal of Pharmacology (IJP) and attending the XXXVI Annual Conference of the Indian Pharmacological Society at Delhi, I sincerely feel that the majority of the members of the