has been shown to be of benefit in certain circumstances. While patients with nonspecific complaints or anxious patients may need some kind of therapy to alleviate anxiety, in an ideal situation the treating physician must explain to the patient the rationale behind the therapy.

Occasionally, use of placebo might be a defense for inability to make a correct diagnosis. The higher rate of use of placebo by residents raises concerns regarding their training and whether they are being appropriately supervised by the teachers. To conclude, placebo use though common is not entirely ethical and its use must be limited to research situations where the study protocol has been explained to the participants.

ETHICS OF PLACEBO USE

Sir,

Shah et al., have done well to evaluate the status of use of placebo in an Indian city.[1] The study raises important ethical concerns, especially regarding use of placebo in unsuspecting patients. That only 3.3% of the study population believed that placebo should never be used is of utmost concern. Obviously this practice needs to be countered. Placebo

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