Dear Editor,
I read with interest the article by Bhattacharya Kaushik about “Mobile phone and the Surgeon – is there a controversy?”.[1] The author has highlighted such valuable points in the article that it serves as a guideline to all hospitals about the use of mobile phones. I wanted to add few points to them based on the guidelines[2] by the Medicines and the Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) release in 2005. The report points to the fact that the mobile phones fall in the medium group based on the risk of interference with the electrical and electronic activities of the hospital system. What is worth noticing is that the high interference group involves such equipments as porters’ two way communication radios and analogue emergency service radios. As these equipments are often allowed in the emergency setting, I am sure mobile phones can also be used with caution. The directive is to use only in an emergency and never for routine communication! This is for all forms of two-way communications including those carried by porters and analogue emergency service radios. An outright restriction of mobile phones will only land us in untoward and unpleasant incidents of failure in effective and timely communications. This may mean communication at any level in the vast health care sector – need not be between two staff members of the hospital. Designated areas can be allocated and clearly marked in the hospitals and these should always be switched off near a critical care area or life support medical system without any ambiguity. I would like to quote further the article by Myerson et al.[3] in British Medical Journal about the way mobile phones can be used in select areas inside the hospital. These will surely guide us towards efficient use of mobile phones with minimal interference as regards patient safety.

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REFERENCES