Financial report 2001-2002

INCOME RS	
Subscriptions	91,195.00
Membership fees	700.00
Donations	8,800.00
Interest on fixed deposit and savings bank account	19,490.00
Sale of back issues	53,235.75
Life subscription no longer refundable	25,080.00
Misc	440.00
Total:	**199,020.75**

EXPENDITURE RS	
Establishment expenditure (printing, stationery, telephone and fax)	14,316.00
Conveyance	3,210.00
Salary	32,500.00
Bank charges	2,817.00
Audit fees	1,000.00
Miscellaneous expenses	50.00
Depreciation	10,414.00
Contingency fund	40,000.00
Printing and posting of journal	87,594.75
including back issues	
Surplus carried to balance sheet	7,119.00
Total:	**1,99,020.75**

BALANCE SHEET

PROPERTIES AND ASSETS RS	
Fixed assets	12,883.00
Tax deducted at source on interest	3,821.00
In saving bank account	96,001.90
Cash on hand with trustee	23.00
Fixed deposits	3,25,008.00
Total	**4,37,755.90**

FUNDS AND LIABILITIES RS	
Trust funds or corpus	14,157.00
Contingencies/ Reserve fund	45,000.00
Liabilities (life subscriptions)	303,250.00
Income and expenditure A/c	75,349.90
Total:	**437,756.90**

A look at our financial status might suggest that the Forum for Medical Ethics Society is doing well. Our income from subscriptions more than met the main activity of the trust, printing and posting of the journal. And we were able to set aside a contingency fund of Rs 40,000 to meet unexpected costs in the future.

However, the majo rity of the Rs 91,725 income from subscriptions, came from a collaborative venture with Cehat to promote medical ethics. In this collaboration, Cehat paid for complimentary one-year subscriptions to individuals, and life subscriptions to educational institutions, totalling Rs 58,000. It was hoped that life subscriptions would reach the journal to more medical students, and the one-year subscriptions would be renewed, increasing our subscription base.

Given that a substantial proportion of income from subscriptions came from this collaborative venture, and we have no such collaborations currently, income from subscriptions in financial year 2002-2003 is not expected to be as high.

Second, we also earned income from life subscriptions which are over six years old and are therefore no longer refundable. Using this money (Rs 25,080) as income to pay for the journal's printing and posting in effect subsidises expenses which should have been paid for through new subscriptions, and also eats into the reserve created through life subscriptions.

A third source of income (Rs 40,000) came from the sale of back issues of the journal, in the form of CDs, to Cehat. It was hoped that this income would be used towards new activities. However, it has been used to for the journal and office functioning.

Fourth, while our subscription base has stabilised after a sharp drop some years ago, it continues to be very low – less than 600 of which about -0 are life subscriptions. While the many letters we receive from all over India and abroad indicate that the journal is being read and noticed in the field of health and medical ethics in this part of the world, we are very far from our goal of 5,000 subscriptions to assure financial stability.

In fact, we have come no closer to this goal in the last five years. Our subscription base went from about 600 in 1998 to below 400 in 1999 to about 600 today. Separately, life subscriptions have increased from about 80 in 1998 to about 100 today. The sharp dip in 1999 was probably due to poor administration and follow-up of renewals.

Our current subscription base is certainly not enough to sustain the journal's production -- and it is unlikely to increase unless we make a special effort.

As the journal's registration application is still ongoing, we are not entitled to subsidised postage. To give a break-up of the journal printing and postage expenses totalling Rs 87,594, we spent Rs 42,346 on printing the journal, Rs 21,000 on CDs of back issues and Rs 24,128.75 on postage.

Another important expense has been that of salaries for part-time administrative help. This expense reflects the realisation that while FMES is a not-for-profit organisation it cannot run on voluntary work alone. While our administrative functioning has often left much to be desired, it is hoped that such complaints are a thing of the past. We believe that a strong administration is essential for the organisation to survive and grow. In fact, the expenses on salaries do not reflect all the work that goes into the production of the journal, maintenance of the website, and related activities. All this labour is done on a voluntary basis. Likewise, many related costs are subsidised by members and well-wishers.

More efficient office functioning, with prompt follow-up of expired subscriptions to get renewals, keeping an eye on printing and postage costs, and so on, will have some impact on our financial stability. Second, we must collect more subscriptions and look at other means of raising funds. We must raise sufficient funds to meet salary and office expenses as well as to pay for printing and posting the journal.

What can we predict for the future? For one, our expenses are bound to go up. We have worked from members' residences and clinics. We plan to organise an independent office where we can do all editorial and administrative work for the journal, as well as provide a space for discussion for those interested in medical ethics. We have also decided to improve the quality of paper and printing, both of which require more money. Our website has been supported by friend and well-wisher Mr Sabu Francis. We must at least reimburse the cost of server space, if not the labour costs of maintaining the site. Likewise, we have benefitted from the honorary work of Mr Sachin Mulgaokar who has audited our accounts without charge all these years. Now that we are in slightly better financial shape, it is only appropriate that Mr Mulgaokar be paid for his services.

Over the last year or so, we have been part of a number of local, national and international initiatives in the area of medical ethics. And we start the second decade of FMES, the journal has a new editorial team and expanded editorial boards. In fact, the anticipated increase in expenses should not be seen as liability but as a challenge, as we grow in scope, reach, strength and stability.

In all this, we are only too aware that nothing is possible without the support and involvement of our readers, contributors and subscribers. It is you who have made the journal what it is today, and it is your inputs which will take it forward.