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Editorial

Given the norms of medical practice as they exist in our country today, survival of a quarterly journal on medical ethics is an event to celebrate.

This is not written in an attempt at congratulating ourselves. We take our continued existence as a sign justifying optimism. All does not appear to have been lost in the prevailing culture of commerce in medicine. *Medical Ethics* continues into its second year not due to any superhuman effort on our part but because of the support it has received from you, particularly from friends who have provided regular financial help.

Since this is the only journal of its kind in the country today, its survival sounds a hurrah for all those practicing medicine ethically. Perhaps it is also an acknowledgment of support from those who have strayed from the straight and narrow path but are uncomfortable with what they are doing and are seeking alternatives to their unenviable situations.

In an environment of plummeting ethical and moral standards this journal started in a very haphazard way. Under the impression that the Medical Councils (in Delhi and the states) were our own self-regulatory bodies when we made an attempt to contribute towards their efficient functioning, we discovered that these councils are as politicised and that their elections are as blatantly rigged as in mainstream politics (see *Medical Ethics* Vol. 1, no. 1, pages 1-3).

We did not wait for a T.N. Sheshan to appear and put the house in order. An individual's extraordinary effort, though necessary, can never substitute for clean and democratic

institutions. These can only follow from the collective effort of the profession. This requires patience and firmness in continuing our campaign for improvement in ethical standards. We graduated from the educational (for us) electoral campaign for seats in the Medical Council to a long term program. As part of that effort, we decided to produce this journal.

The feed back received from many of you has encouraged and supported us. We are grateful not only to our colleagues in India but also to those abroad who have done so much to keep our morale high.

As we enter the second year of publication, we strive to improve the services rendered by the journal. There is a modest increase in the number of pages. We are taking steps to improve the layout and design. We are registering the Forum for Medical Ethics (FME) and the journal with the relevant authorities. Obviously, publication of *Medical Ethics* will be one of several regular activities of the FME. (Other activities of the FME - organising seminars, workshops and training sessions, publishing booklets on specific issues, bringing out a handbook of medical ethics.. - will continue.) Your suggestions are welcome.

We must work together to swell the ranks of ethical doctors in this country. In addition to caring for our patients, let us try to heal our ailing profession as well. *Medical Ethics* is one means towards our goal. We sincerely hope that your continued support will make the journal not only a permanent feature in Indian medical literature but also an indispensable item for reading for all health care professionals and other concerned citizens.

Amar Jesani