BRIEWE



service programme for graduating physicians. However there is room for imaginative incentive programmes to retain physicians in rural areas such as the one adopted in Ontario, Canada (http://www.oma.org/cme/)

In targeting the vital registration system, the statistical organisation should activate and formalise the dormant medical assessor and querying systems. The automatic selection of underlying cause of death does not work for all cases. Some cases are rejected by the system. Such cases could be queried with physicians and/or referred to the medical assessor. In Australia, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) has an in-built query subsystem in their cause-of-death processing system. In that subsystem, information from rejected forms is automatically outputted onto a standard form and posted to the relevant physician for querying.

The statistical organisation should be encouraged to conduct periodic evaluation of internal consistency among medical coders and undertake occasional external review of all steps of the coding process.

Further, the statistical organisation should be encouraged to continue strengthening in-house and external training of nosologists and place value on long service. Good-quality nosologists are very hard to get and the available ones should be valued and used to train new recruits.

Lastly, the statistical organisation should be encouraged to make full cause-of-death data available to researchers as done elsewhere. Limited demographic information on cause-of-death data can only lead to limited analyses. Researchers need to get all the non-confidential information (everything else beside name, ID number and physical address) in order to pinpoint the problem areas in data quality and do further analysis on the data.

Sulaiman Bah

Department of Epidemiology University of Limpopo PO Box 215 Medunsa 0204

Myths, magic and medicine

To the Editor: I found your editorial with the above title¹ extremely interesting and thought-provoking. Indeed, patients in virtually every health care discipline consult such providers



with an element of belief. Without belief in the ability of the doctor to aid in a time of health crisis, the task of caring for such patients would often be more difficult. As such we need to accept and respect this aspect of health care.

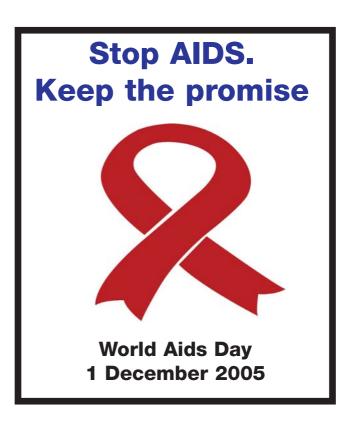
I agree with you that many practices are based entirely on a so-called 'belief system', but I must question your inference that chiropractic is another one of these belief systems. Today there is so much evidence in support of chiropractic and the value of such care – here I refer to our 'Open letter to the medical profession' in the May issue of the *SAMJ* (p. 293).

In the interests of professional bridge-building, and ultimately the welfare of the patients we serve, I sincerely trust that you will take a fresh look at our profession. I believe we can progress towards a point where we can interrelate and respect each other with greater understanding, and without the bias and misrepresentations of the past. Perhaps we could even discuss some of these developments soon over a cup of coffee.

Reg Engelbrecht

CEO: Chiropractic Association of South Africa PO Box 706 Bethlehem 9700

1. Van Niekerk JP. Myths, magic and medicine (editorial). S Afr Med J 2005; 95: 447-448.





The University of Cape Town presents:

PATHOLOGY CONFERENCE FOR GENERAL PRACTITIONERS & GENERAL PRACTICE CONFERENCE

JANUARY 2006

Kramer Building, Middle Campus, University Of Cape Town

ACADEMIC PROGRAMME:

- The two-day Pathology Conference will run on Monday 23 and Tuesday 24 January 2006. Topics will be relevant to general practice
- The three-day General Conference will run from Wednesday 25 to Friday 27 January 2006. Topics will include: Surgery, psychiatry, medicine, nutrition, ENT, therapeutics, ethics and a group of interesting general medicine topics.

ENQUIRIES can be directed to Marta Collins at tel (021) 406 6407, fax (021) 448 6263 or email mcollin@curie.uct.ac.za. Alternatively, please find details on our Website: www.cmc.uct.ac.za

904