



Dispensing doctors disadvantaged by pharmacy clinics and new law on dispensing

To the Editor: The new law promulgated with regard to the dispensing rights of medical practitioners weighs heavily in favour of pharmacies. The very same are carrying out procedures and treatments that rightly belong with the general practitioner, e.g. blood studies, inoculations and primary health care, where there is an adequate presence of medical practitioners

Will nurses and pharmacists also be restricted in carrying out primary health care functions without adequate training and licensing?

The medical profession, traditionally a very divided group, must for once stand united to reclaim our function from the pharmacies as they are now doing to us.

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Pitfalls of translation

To the Editor: I refer to an article on the pitfalls of translation in a recent issue of the *Journal*.¹ In dealing with the problem of a cross-cultural questionnaire the authors make it quite clear that this exemplary exercise arose out of the EuroQol group's study design requirements.¹ They recommend that 'more time, effort and funding be invested by researchers to ensure that cross-cultural questionnaire-based outcome measures are indeed valid'. It seems to me that two kinds of validity are involved. One concerns the outcome for each question as originally framed. The other concerns the measuring of quality of life, which must have been the aim of the study. I doubt that quality of life can be meaningfully standardised internationally (and perhaps not intranationally in a multicultural society), because it depends on how quality of life is defined, and by whom. It would be interesting to use the authors' skills in the development of a QOL questionnaire among rural Xhosa and compare results with the translated HRQoL for 'validity'.

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1. Mkoka S, Vaughan J, Wylie T, Yelland H, Jelsma J. The pitfalls of translation — a case study based on the translation of the EQ-5D into Xhosa. *S Afr Med J* 2003; **93**: 265-266.

Misquotation

To the Editor: I refer you to the Izindaba article 'Mechanics overhaul ethics policy' by Chris Bateman that appeared in a recent issue of the *Journal*.¹ I would like to draw your attention to the fact that I have been misquoted.

I am specifically referring to the following paragraph: 'Mkhize said: "We've done far more than just what Jan did (Van der Merwe resigned amid some controversy as a specialist investigator last year)"'.

The statement I made was: 'We've done quite a lot, including what Jan (Professor Van der Merwe) had done.' I did not make my statement of our achievements in a comparative mode, i.e. versus what Professor Van der Merwe had achieved. I also made no reference to Professor Van der Merwe's resignation. By including this statement in the inverted commas, Bateman creates the impression that those were my words.

I am extremely disappointed about the way in which my comments were altered and would appreciate publication of an erratum in your next publication.

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1. Bateman C. Mechanics overhaul ethics policy (Izindaba).. *S Afr Med J* 2003; **93**: 483-486.

Chris Bateman replies: It is quite possible that I misquoted Boyce Mkhize. I have not been able to locate my actual verbatim notes to assist me in verifying the facts in the print time available.

On his second point, I have checked the published copy and the parenthesis *was* included in the quote. This was totally counter to what I intended to convey, i.e. to give some background context, not attributable to Boyce Mkhize at all. How it happened is beside the point. I regret the error. You have my apology on both counts.

Extrauterine pregnancy

To the Editor: There has recently been considerable publicity regarding a case of extrauterine pregnancy managed successfully at Groote Schuur Hospital, with both mother and baby in good health after the delivery. As such I thought it of interest to record another case of this rare condition.

On Friday 7 February 1992 Dr Mark Baekeland, a Belgian registrar on an exchange appointment working in the