

Letters ♦ Correspondance

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Interestingly, these letters come from practitioners who graduated from privileged Category 1 Countries.

It would be eye-opening to hear the harrowing, nightmarish experiences of Category 2 graduates in British Columbia instead, to really appreciate the extent of suffering and discrimination these doctors have experienced. I believe all these Category 1 physicians, especially if graduates of a foreign medical school, who have the privilege to practise in British Columbia, should enjoy this apparently unfairly earned privilege with dignified silence. Their vociferous indignation is misplaced and hurtful to too many of their colleagues from the "rest of the world."

—Gabriel V. Salvadori, MD
Anchorage, Alaska
by e-mail

References

1. Mackey P. No special treatment given [letters]. *Can Fam Physician* 1999;45:2585.
2. Davidson H. South African saga continues [letter]. *Can Fam Physician* 1999;45:2586.

Is this good palliative care?

Do Not Go Gentle? I have never written a letter to *Canadian Family Physician*, and so perhaps I could have found something more earth-shattering than a title on which to comment. Still, I take issue with the title on your December cover.

I am sure we were to understand the rest of the poem even without reading the inside cover! "Do not go gentle into that good night.... Rage, rage against the dying of the light."

Is that the goal of geriatric medicine or any care in medicine for that matter? I thought that perhaps one of the loftiest goals and most satisfying achievements of physicians included helping people go gently into the night. I have helped people rage at their death, and apart from a heroic story to tell, there is no joy in resuscitating someone who did not wish that or who ended up with a poor outcome, even if that outcome included life. Isn't this contrary to good palliative care?

Isn't this why we do not need euthanasia in our society because we have physicians who respect life and death?

Perhaps I read too much into an innocent title. Perhaps I am biased by professional and personal experiences. I, however, recall being bothered by Dylan Thomas' words even in earlier days. Today I face a greater challenge, as I have a son with a degenerative neuromuscular condition. I know there will be nothing more difficult than the time when he will die, but I hope that I will have the personal strength, and I hope that I belong to a profession that has the strength, to allow him to go gently into the good night and not rage against the dying of the light.

—Suzanne Shephard, MD, CCFP(EM)
and Brian's mother
Kingston, Ont
by e-mail

Response

Thank you for your letter. I am sorry that the December cover struck the wrong note for you. I think you have interpreted it in a manner that was not intended: by no means were we suggesting that end-of-life care should be a constant struggle when all reasonable hope of recovery is gone. Rather, we were celebrating the power of human grit and determination to be involved in life even at an advanced age. The woman on the cover was not raging against dying but Jean Chretien's government. We thought this was a good image for the end of the Millennium and the Year of Older Persons.

Most people who have responded to this cover (and there have been many), felt very positive about the image. I hope with this background you can reconsider your opinion.

—Tony Reid, MD, MSC, CCFP, FCFP
Scientific Editor, Canadian Family Physician

Corrections

For the Practice Tip "Management of pregnancy-induced nausea," (*Can Fam Physician* 1999;45:303) only one author was identified. There were, in fact, two authors: Ellen R. Wiebe, MD, CCFP and Lois Cassels, RN BSCN.

Dans l'article en français «Améliorer les soins aux patients souffrant d'hypertension et d'arthrite» de la rubrique Actualités (*Can Fam Physician* 2000;46:490), une erreur s'est glissée dans le numéro de téléphone donné à la fin. Les numéros de téléphone exacts sont 1-877-838-2427 ou (514) 343-3353.

Le *Médecin de famille canadien* présente ses excuses pour cette faute typographique.

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In the article "Bereaved children" by Dr Karen Schultz (*Can Fam Physician* 1999;45:2914-21), Table 3 was incorrectly referenced. The source of the table was Anderson F, Black FM, Blood PA, Braithwaite DL, Cairns M, Cummings L, et al. *Medical Care of the Dying*. 3rd ed. Victoria, BC: Victoria Hospice Society; 1998. p. 523.