

made. Once this decision is conveyed to the doctor, it is the doctor's duty to carry it out and work with the family to make patient pain free and comfortable.

Our family was very unhappy with the attitude of doctors with their hostile nature and lack of cooperation, especially during the last few days of our mother's life. After her death I did have a long talk with the medical director of the hospital and he did agree that they could have done better. He told me that this could be a learning experience for the doctors. He was very receptive and apologetic.

It is time to take action now, or some else will undergo a similar ordeal. I suggest that every hospital in India should have an ethics committee, similar to what we have here in the USA to deal with such matters. The committee must include physicians, nurses and also someone non-medical from the community such as a priest or well respected volunteer. It should advise the attending physician who has the ultimate authority. Hospice services should be available to patients and families in India. My family and I are writing this to improve conditions in India, a final gift from our mother to our motherland.

## OBITUARY

### Dr AM Pai

My introduction to Dr Pai was as a telephone voice. Although he had become so familiar with Sahyog and with us, for a long time, I never met Dr Pai face to face. Through a mutual friend, he had organised some donations for our school and clinic at Sahyog. Little did I know that what I had expected to be a one-time affair would turn into a long-term relationship. As the head of a community-based organisation which works with children, one of my difficult duties is interacting with individual donors. However, unlike them all, Dr Pai never put us through the indignity of exhibiting the children for him or made a show of his generosity. In fact, he never even let us say thank you. Even more importantly, not only did he support us himself, he spent a good deal of time and effort to get the support of others as well.

Every few months I would get a call asking me what I needed and offering to arrange for it. A friend fondly called him "Dr Kabadiwala" for his enthusiasm for collecting things that could be used by small organisations such as ours. I always appreciated his talent for reaching out to the smallest organisations and linking them to those who wanted to do some charity. To me, he seemed to represent the finest example of what we would like our doctors to be - people who are honest and socially committed in their professional lives and in their personal and public lives as well. When I first visited his clinic, I was amazed to see a little sign wishing his patients the best of health, so that they did not need to use his services! Surely, I thought, this is a person whom no one would mistrust! Undoubtedly, Dr Pai's meticulousness and integrity made it possible for him to link all kinds of people, from his patients and friends to organisations and associations of varied hues, for a larger good.

The last time I called him, he said to me, "Neha Madhiwalla is always welcome in my clinic!" Dr Pai, what a pity that you are not there anymore to welcome me in.

Neha Madhiwalla