

# A search for revenue

## Our journal

The publication of any journal is associated with ethical conflicts, the most common being the act of making ends meet whilst remaining true to ethical principles. The need to avoid moral conflict is more acute when the journal is devoted to ethics.

Publication entails expenditure of resources -- time, money and effort. These need to be generated in the first place through voluntary effort. Soon the need for paid contributions becomes evident. The consumption of and expenditure on these resources must be justified by the product. This note concerns itself with finances and our journal.

## Some facts

*Issues in Medical Ethics* (I M E), a registered journal, is published by the Forum for Medical Ethics Society (FMES), which was founded by individuals who were pained by dwindling ethical standards in the practice of medicine. Each founding member has a modest income. Several of them work full-time in public sector institutes or non-governmental organisations.

These members have contributed to the journal by making modest donations and by sustained voluntary effort.

The journal and the Society are alert to the fact that none of its present staff has undergone any formal training in ethics. There has, therefore, been no attempt at playing high priest. In trying to reach its goal, the journal has depended heavily on the collective wisdom of the members of the editorial board, its contributors and well-wishers. This entails effort and expense. Voluntary contributions from members of the editorial board, administrative staff, desktop publishing services and co-ordinated mailing services in US have provided a substantial hidden subsidy for the journal. We are also privileged to obtain a partial subsidy, through concessional tariffs, in the printing of the journal. We get no subsidy on postage.

Aware of our limitations, we started publication of a quarterly newsletter and graduated to a journal. In the process, we have added more material and pages to every issue -- a welcome sign. This has also meant need for more funds for sustenance. We realise that this need for funds will increase on account of

inflation.

Clearly, there needs to be a policy and a programme of action for collecting funds -- guided by ethical considerations -- to run the show. We welcome comments, criticism and suggestions on our policy.

## Collecting revenue

We have kept in mind three basic criteria:

The intentions for fund raising should be ethically justifiable. We seek external sources of revenue as we have now exhausted all our internal resources for supporting this journal.

The outcome of fund collection must be ethically justifiable. The income is to be plowed into the production and improvement of the journal.

The process of fund collection ought to be ethically acceptable and must be transparent. There are three sources for generating revenue viz. through subscription; through donations and through advertisements.

Sustenance of any journal through subscriptions is the most desired means because this is through voluntary choice by subscribers. This ambition may prove difficult to attain in a field such as medical ethics which is not high on the priority lists of its potential readers. Even if it were to eventually prove a much sought after journal, it needs to survive until this happy state is reached. At present, we must, perforce, explore other avenues for revenue. Our policy stipulates that as soon as the subscription reaches a state where it assures survival and development of the journal, we shall stop seeking other avenues for funds.

## Subscriptions

Subscribers pay voluntarily. One may argue that once the dish out material is merit-worthy, the contract with the subscribers is ethically complete. We believe, though, that readers of journals devoted to ethics -- in particular, those reading our journal -- must be co-participants in the endeavour to improve medical practice. We consider it only fair to let our co-participants know how the revenue from their subscriptions is spent. From 1997 we shall publish on these pages a statement of income and expense also detailing the number of subscribers and the number of those receiving the journal free of cost with reasons for the latter form of distribution.

We reiterate that funds obtained from life-subscriptions are placed in recognised savings schemes. We utilise merely the proceeds in the form of interest. This is why we have made the commitment that in the event of demise of this journal within six years of payment of the life-subscription, the full sum will be returned.

## Donors

We seek donations from individuals and institutions and will publish the names of all donors once a year to ensure transparency.

## Advertisements -- some self-imposed restrictions

We will not accept any advertisement of products or services deemed health hazards. Advertisements of foetal sonography for sex-determination and of cigarettes fall into this category.

We will not accept any advertisement of irrational products (such as drug combinations).

We will not accept any advertisement of claims that are currently judged to be untenable.

We will not accept any advertisements from organisations which have been boycotted due to subversion of ethics. Union Carbide (USA), for example, would be rejected as it did not reveal the antidote to isocyanate poisoning despite having this data on their classified files.

As with donations, we shall publish a list of advertisers on these pages once a year so that if we have unwittingly transgressed our code, we can make amends and avoid repetition.

## Tariffs for black and white advertisements

Location	Rate per insertion
Outside back cover	Rs. 2,000/-
Inside back cover	Rs. 1500/-
Full page	Rs. 1 000/-
Half page	Rs. 500/-
Quarter page	Rs. 250/-

A discount of 10% will be offered for those advertising in all four issues of the journal.