

Unethical practices. by an Indian medical journal

We have before us a set-ox copy of a letter written some time ago by the Editorial Director of the *Indian Medical Gazette* to a professor of medicine. We reproduce its contents minus the names of individuals. We are particularly saddened that this journal, serving the medical profession since 1866, now stoops to **such** measures to boost their revenues from advertising. Especially worrying is the last sentence in the letter, suggesting, as it **does**, that the publication of further submissions to the journal may be facilitated by such **cooperation**. Equally dismaying is the fact that senior doctors, holding academic positions of repute, are willing to kowtow to such requests. Obligations to pharmaceutical companies and manufacturers of equipment used in hospitals and clinics cannot but jeopardise our independence of thought and action. As there is no such thing as a free lunch? sooner or later we are bound to be asked to return the favour regardless of the fact that our consciences may rebel at the act.

A journal consistently carrying papers of quality will, inevitably, enjoy wide circulation. This, in turn, will automatically attract advertisers. The need to beg for advertisements and cajole doctors to act as touts for the journal implies a low editorial standard. If this be confirmed, it may be better to allow nature to take its course and provide the journal a decent burial rather than keep it propped up by **such unprincipled** deeds.

Indian Medical Gazette.. .

Block F, 105-C New Alipore, Calcutta 700052...

Dear Dr....

We have pleasure in informing you that your article entitled... has already been published in INDIAN MEDICAL GAZETTE.

Reprints and a copy of the Journal will be sent to you within a few days.

We need advertising support from the leading pharmaceutical companies to **oversome** the present financial stringency we are facing.

Some of the pharmaceutical companies have big budget for advertising in Medical Journal. It has been observed that they release their advertisement in the Journal whereform there is great pressure.

May I request you to send six letters to the following pharmaceutical companies, requesting them to release advertisement in INDIAN MEDICAL G A Z E T T E :

(the names and addresses of senior officers of six pharmaceutical companies follow)

Few copies of current advertisement rate cards are enclosed for your perusal.

We are sure you will extend your full support and cooperation and we will be glad to hear from you.

With regards

Editorial Director.

Unfortunately the game of medicine is played with the cards under the table... In the intimacies of medical counsels,... who is there to note the significant glance, the shrug, the hardly expressed innuendo of one or other of our brethren?... Thus we work not in the light of public opinion but in the secrecy of the chamber; and perhaps the best of us are apt at times to forget the delicacies and sincerities which under these conditions are essential to harmony and honour. But the more careful we make ourselves of these loyalties the less we shall suspect others; the more candid and sincere we become with our brethren the less they will suspect us.

Sir Clifford Albutt (1836-1925) in *On professional education with special reference to medicine*.
