

patients by way of certificates should be restricted to those based on documented medical fact. This should not be difficult

4. Quacks We compete with a large number of unqualified and qualified quacks. They are usually more united than us. CPA can help us curb this menace to patients.
5. Fear Fear of penalties under the CPA will help keep us on our toes. It will, in fact, make us professionally more competent. There are several ills prevalent in our profession. We have been turning a blind eye to them thus far. We do not feel the pinch till a surgeon demands an exorbitant fee in unaccounted money from a friend or relative or operates on them without a genuine indication. A member of my family was subjected to a procedure in the radiological department of a private hospital. Operation theatre charges, separate charges for the use of a table and trolley containing a few pieces of gauze were added to the bill. Protests did not help till the CPA was referred to. It was only then that the hospital authorities saw reason.

Commercialisation of medicine

As Dr. N. H. Antia, Director, Foundation for Research in Community Health, points out, our middle class and elite have adopted all things western - music, fast food, attire and commercialisation. Unfortunately we, literate and highly educated doctors, have also fallen into this trap.

We, along with others in the middle class, pay exorbitant capitation fees to get our children into this profession so that they can make millions later.

Has the CPA proved a monster?

It is now several months since this act became applicable to us. How many of us have been hauled up before the court? Is the CPA flooded with complaints against doctors? Has not the court dealing with complaints against doctors, in fact, cleared the names of doctors?

Let us not oppose the CPA. Let us, instead, set our own house in order. We can do so by

- promoting ethical professional practices
- attending to our patients with sincerity, honesty and affection
- maintaining good medical records
- excellent communication with patients, relatives, colleagues and consultants
- attending CME programs
- promoting solidarity among ourselves so that we can help colleagues in need.

Having done this, let us help modify the CPA in a productive manner. Let us advocate that if a doctor is wrongly hauled up before the court, the complainant must be made to pay compensation for the harm done and inconvenience caused to the doctor.

Let us take this opportunity to promote through health education an ability in our patients to distinguish between appropriate, necessary and excessive medical care. Let us do justice to our task of serving as comprehensive advisors on health to the families entrusting themselves to us.

By pure chance we started publication of *Medical Ethics* in August 1993. Initially intended to serve as a newsletter, we have now set our sights on graduating into a full-fledged journal.

This goal will be better served if the first issue of each volume appears in January. We are therefore terminating Volume 2 with this issue. The first issue of Volume 3 will be published in January 1995.

Those entitled to receive Volume 2 will now be provided all four issues of Volume 3 in 1995, in addition to the two issues in 1994, without any extra cost.