

Slumdog Millionaire

I read with interest the article published in June 2009 issue of Indian Pediatrics titled “*Indian Slum children in Western cinema: Sensitive portrayal of stark reality or crass exploitation?*” Dr Vashishtha deserves appreciation for making a nice critical analysis on such a sensitive human issue. I wish to make following comments.

A British director’s work *Slumdog millionaire*, bags 8 Oscar awards and we accuse him of glorifying Indian poverty! From the movies name, the slums picturised in it, the child trafficking, the beggar industry and other scenes like the horrifying treatment by the cops are picked out from the movie and criticized in the name of “it’s not the true Indian picture” Why this over sentimental reaction every time we see Indian poverty on the big screen? Why are we only happy watching Karan Johar’s depiction of larger than life Indians? Why we are satisfied watching the rosier side of our country? Or is it that it hurts our ego to be reminded of the naked truth? It’s like a neighbor pointing to the dirty backyard of our bungalow and we don’t appreciate the criticism a bit! We know its there, but we don’t care much to clean it; we have almost adjusted to live with it but we don’t like to be reminded of it. Why?

Nowhere does the movie claim to be the whole and sole depiction of India, it unfolds a story of a young boy called Jamal, who happens to be from Mumbai slums. Coincidentally, it is the largest slum in world.. Where is our pride? Has the film director depicted anything that’s not true? Well, it is a bitter truth that our country has the biggest gap between the haves and have-nots, we happen to be a country of extremes and paradox. On one hand, some of us make it to the fortune 500, the richest persons in the world, on the other hand, we also top the list of people living below poverty line struggling for survival. Where on earth shall we get child trafficking, child labor, child prostitution and child beggar industry more flourishing than in our country? Why this uproar then? Merely picking out one slum child and standing for her child rights and uttering rhetoric because she happens to be a star in a foreign movie shows our hypocrisy. If we so earnestly care for children rights and their exploitation, then look around, it’s happening all around us, in our city just around the corner, may be even in our homes. If we want to start cleaning then start with our own locality. It is time for self introspection, not for shedding crocodile tears, mudslinging or pseudo-idealism.

Arun Shah,

Associate Professor,
NMCH (Nepal)

drarunshah@hotmail.com

Salt or Water in Critically Ill Children

The controversy about what fluids to use in critically ill children to prevent hyponatraemia is ongoing. We congratulate Singhi and Jayashree for their contribution to this debate(1). There is however one point in their paper that needs clarification. In **Fig.1**, a line showing electrolyte free water (EFW) intake and expected fall in serum sodium has been drawn.

It runs diagonally across the figure suggesting that a linear relationship between the two is expected. The data source for this assumption has not been provided.

Interestingly, in their data on children who developed hyponatraemia, the biggest falls in serum sodium were seen in the patients who received less EFW ($r = -0.57$). The message can be best conveyed by drawing the regression line. We have scanned in their figure and have drawn the regression line in the attached figure. This graph depicts data on the relationship of EFW and fall in sodium in