

ship between MMR and these variables (refer to *Table III* and *Fig. 2* of the article).

2. Secondly, compared to industrialized nations, the countries of South Asia region have a lower prevalence of contraception and female literacy and several fold higher MMR (*Table II* of the article). This clearly supports the argument as to

why the countries of the South Asia region need to focus attention on contraception and female literacy as - strategies ^for reduction in MMR besides the ongoing health inputs.

S. Ramji,

Professor,

Department of Pediatrics,

Maulana Azad Medical College,

New Delhi 110 002.

Consumer Protection Act and Medical Profession

Collusion, says the much venerated Oxford English Dictionary, is a Fraudulent secret understanding, especially between ostensible opponents. Why Bal(l) uses this word to describe the holding of a medical conference by a medical association is beyond comprehension. The pharmaceutical industry does offer financial support to such academic activities, but there is nothing secret about this. Associations hold conferences and continuing Medical Education programs to update the knowledge and enhance the skills of their members, which ultimately benefits the consumers; surely there is nothing ill-intentioned about such activity?

The article (l) on Consumer Protection Act (COPRA) is full of such unwarrantedly strong language towards the medical profession. There is no argument, of course, about the content of the article. Much of what is written is unfortunately true, and the deterioration in standards of medical care and ethics is cause for grave concern.

A vocal section of the medical profession has opposed the COPRA, but they are

by no means representative of the profession as a whole. There are many who feel that some form of regulation was overdue, to prevent this once-noble profession from sinking further into the murky depths of crass commercialisation. If this act can reduce medical malpractice, incompetence, and carelessness, it is something to be welcomed wholeheartedly.

Even today, there are many honorable men and women in medical practice, who approach their vocation with honesty, skill, ethics and compassion. To denounce the entire body of medical persons as "ill-equipped, uncontrolled, and mercenary" is not fair. I share the author's obvious anguish at the state of medical practice today, but abusing the entire profession in print does not seem to be a viable remedy for the ills plaguing us.

Parang N. Mehta,

Mehta Hospital,

Opposite Putli,

Sagrampura,

Surat395002.

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