



Treaty obligations

Accompanying the December issue of *NZFP* was a copy of the College audit and survey on Treaty of Waitangi obligations to Māori 2001. It is impossible to read this document, together with its recommendations, without seeing the potential for serious violations of ethical principles.

Inherent in all modern codes of ethics is the duty of doctors to disregard considerations of race in the management of patients. The British Medical Association states this explicitly in *The Handbook of Medical Ethics*:

7.7 In relation to the general principles underlying medical practice (b) Equality of patients regardless of religion, race or reputation.

The same principle is affirmed in the Code of Ethics of the New Zealand Medical Association under responsibilities to the patient:

7. Recognise a responsibility to render medical service to any person regardless of colour etc...

This same principle requiring all doctors, including New Zealand doctors, to treat all patients regardless of race or colour must prevail over any duty they may feel towards the Treaty. The College Council's initiative in this issue suggests nothing other than simplistic political correctness, and is to be deplored.

Michael Cooper

PACman and Mrs MOPS

Ian St George's article (*NZFP* October 2001) – *PACman and Mrs MOPS: A challenge to educational orthodoxy* – deserves close attention. If, as he seems to imply, MOPS is educational orthodoxy, then the sooner it is given concrete boots and heaved into the Pacific, the better for orthodoxy. MOPS has never been other than a disparate collection of good and woolly thoughts, enveloped in a tangle of aspirations, the resultant phantasm dignified as a programme, which has no idea of just what it does achieve, as opposed to what it would like to achieve. It certainly would like to help 'demonstrate competency' for the participants, and no doubt was begun with the best of intentions. And it's at least an attempt, albeit second rate and unsuccessful. But we see no reason for its continued survival. This little Emperor really has no body beneath the scanty clothes. Out, as soon as possible.

There is an even more basic problem with MOPS. It's appropriate for the College to decide about such issues as, say, resuscitation, and perhaps even to determine diagnostic and management abilities. Virtually all the other activities delineated in MOPS do not in themselves help to define a GP who is acceptable to the patient. All these soft options do is satisfy the Medical Council that the College is bending to its demand to have vocationally trained, or at least professionally overseen, doctors.

What of PACman? Not such a bad idea, and for the excellent reasons that

St George explains. Much work has to be done in developing adequate tools for assessment, but should not be beyond us. He suggests a five-year cycle, with the methods employed by the participants to pass the required assessment left to their own decision. Grown up, with, that is, the acceptance of individual responsibility. Not a great deal different, in fact, from the transition from prescribed childhood learning (MOPS) to adult self-learning. And presumably all university graduates self-learn.

There is danger in all this that the College, with the best intention, is producing doctors meeting the College's standards but which may not necessarily meet those of the patient.

If the College gets it wrong we can envisage generations of GPs perpetuating attributes which are of little value to the end-user – the patient.

There is little in the present programme which allows patient input. The DISQ is a start, but the results of such satisfaction surveys are totally predictable. A doctor's patients are a biased population. If the patients like you they'll stay with you. If they don't, they'll go.

We think St George's PACman an excellent humanoid. May at last someone have the guts and the intrepidity to confirm the vision and, in so doing, help to produce a new updated medical educational orthodoxy.

Finally, may we remind ourselves that we are a College, not a pampered primary school.

C P Anyon and H B Rainey