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Continued overleaf

Peripatetic editorial notes

CMJ internet edition

Ceylon Medical Journal, 2000; 45: 1-2

With this issue, the first for the year 2000 AD, the web address (URL) of the *CMJ* will be <http://www.medinet.lk/professional/cmj/CMJhome.html>. The entire journal will be accessible at this web address. The editors and editorial board of the *CMJ* are grateful to **Ceycom Telemedicine Limited** of Colombo 4, who will host the *CMJ*'s internet edition. Their fax number is 94-1-555370 and E-mail info@ccom.lk

The journal's internet edition was earlier hosted by Infolanka.com of the USA. The editorial board is pleased to acknowledge their initiative, which made the *CMJ* the first professional journal in Sri Lanka to have a regular internet version, according to Dr Shyam Fernando, Senior Lecturer in the Department of Clinical Medicine of the University of Colombo. He also points out that until that facility began to be abused, the 'guest book' of *CMJ*'s internet edition was visited by a large number of visitors, nearly all of whom had commented very favourably on the *CMJ* and its content.

Information for authors

The editorial board has decided that all papers submitted for publication in the *CMJ* after 31 December 1999 should conform to the following guidelines.

- 1 Articles submitted by local authors should be accompanied by a cheque for Rs 500.00 crossed in favour of 'Ceylon Medical Journal A/C 10185'. Authors residing overseas please contact the editors for information on the processing fee.
- 2 All units in articles submitted for publication should be in SI (International System of Units).
- 3 All references must be indicated by the appropriate Arabic numeral in parenthesis in the order in which they are quoted in the text, and listed at the end of the article exactly in the *CMJ*'s style.
- 4 A brief and clear statement regarding competing interest(s) of authors should be included.
- 5 Where relevant, a statement regarding funding may be included under "Acknowledgements".
- 6 Where relevant (ie "intervention" studies) a statement that an ethical review body acceptable to the *CMJ* has approved the study, along with documentary evidence of such approval (a photocopy is acceptable) should accompany the article.

Peripatetic editorial notes

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- 7 Where relevant (ie papers with more than one author) a brief statement regarding the contribution of each author to the work reported, should be included.

In the case of papers where ethical review committee approval is not stated, the Editorial Board may refer the paper to such a committee for perusal, subject to the author(s) remitting the appropriate fee for this review.

Articles which do not conform to the directives above will be returned to authors, without further processing, for correction.

For guidance regarding 4 and 7 above, please see footnotes of original research papers in the *Lancet*, and in the *BMJ*.

There's one born every minute

At a time when change seems to be welcomed and venerated as a desirable end in itself by practically everyone, as it probably never was before in human history, it is comforting to know that some things seem never to change. One such thing seems to be the ready availability of unending hordes that fall easy prey to tricksters. The millennium opened with a brilliant piece of marketing by the Northman called Erik the Red, describing the desolate island almost entirely covered by snow and ice that he had discovered, as a most salubrious place to live in, replete with all mod cons and fertile land. Thousands paid him hard-earned money to buy real estate there and trekked hopefully to their Shangri La, before realising that they had been tricked. Observe the brilliant brand name Erik the Red had given to his Island, which remains as eternal testimony to his marketing skills - Greenland (1).

By 1100 the murderous mayhem of the Crusades was in full swing. A succession of popes catalysed the Crusades by generously handing out "indulgences" (promises) to holy warriors, that they would be perfectly all right in the next world however much they may have raped, pillaged, burned and killed in this one. Some Vatican officials who were market driven saw a bright future in selling indulgences. Soon Europe was full of Vatican-licensed "pardoners", ie friars and other worthies authorised to sell indulgences, cash kept rolling in for four centuries: riches enough to build a grand new St Peter's in Rome plus a lot more for Vatican Coffers, until after Martin Luther and the Reformation exposed this massive fraud on the consumer (1).

Things are very different today, you think? How about the last few months of 1999, when governments, institutions and companies paid out billions of dollars to save their information systems from crumbling. And who put these billions in their pockets? This is how the *London Times* put it.

"If there were any justice, the computer industry should fix the millennium bug without charge. After all, they caused it. The main financial institutions in particular have been spending huge sums. In many cases, they have rehired the very same engineers who caused the problem."

So, as the saying goes about suckers: "There's one born every minute". The prayer of conmen in the opening century of the new millennium will be what it was in the past millenniums: "Thank Thee O Lord, for this timely succour".

Reference

1. Anon. A thousand years of con-tricks. *The Economist* (London). Millennium Special Edition. December 31 1999. p 126.

Professor Colvin Goonaratna, Joint editor, CMJ