A Prophet Is Not Without Honor Except Is His Own County—Mark 6.

Not enough of the subscribers and readers of the Hawaii Medical Journal recognize the great skills and dedication of our editor, Norman Goldstein, M.D. On April 15, 2005, at the Moscone Center in San Francisco, Dr. Goldstein was accorded the Laureate Award emblematic of the highest standards in clinical integrity. It marks the first time this prestigious award has been presented to a dermatologist, and serves to recognize the thirty-five years of his participation as a Fellow of the American College of Physicians. Much more than any award, those of us who are privileged to work with him, recognize Dr. Goldstein's incredible energy and devotion to the Hawaii Medical Association and his literary craft. He is never-failing in efforts to provide a quality medical journal for our small organization. Thank you, Norman Goldstein, M.D. We all owe you, Big Time.

Right Of Privacy – Void Where Prohibited By Pharmacists.

What's with these pharmacists who decide on their personal moral basis to refuse to fill legal prescriptions? Whether it is plan B (morning after pill), contraceptive drugs, or even (Oregon) physician assisted suicide drugs, some pharmacists are now refusing to comply with the physician's order. By law, pharmacists are licensed to provide their technical skill in delivering medicine which the physician has directed. A few pharmacists also refuse to direct the patient to another facility, and in rare instances, have even kept the prescription after refusing to comply. This sort of screwball morality impinges on the patient's right to direct his/her medical care, and is a slap in the physician's face. Hopefully, pharmaceutical associations (or perhaps the judiciary) will take prompt action to make these pharmacy bigots follow the law.

Situation Desperate! Send Chocolate.

A study in Lancet showed that chocolate has possible benefits concerning heart disease. The main ingredient, cocoa, is high in flavanols which are also found in red wine, fruits, beans, and nuts. Mars Inc., the big-time candy company, has funded chocolate research with results published in peer reviewed journals. Mars has introduced Dove Dark and CocoaVia bars which are marketed over the internet. The company makes no health claims, but does say the candy "promotes a healthy heart." Processing cocoa to enhance the flavor somewhat decreases the flavonols, especially in milk chocolate. If our ex-president of fast-food fame, were more into dark chocolate, he might have avoided trips to the OR.

Good Morning, Sir. I Am Doctor Pfizer

The American Academy of Dermatology (AAD) is concerned about the lack of dollars to pay for dermatology residencies. Typically, Medicare dollars in hospitals are used to fund residency slots to provide inpatient services or emergency care. Derm residents and others who supply mostly outpatient care, are finding fewer programs. The AAD decided to take action, and has initiated a program with money provided by the Academy, plus funds donated by the pharmaceutical industry combined to open 10 new dermatology residency programs for the July 2006 match. No-strings-attached sounds like a nice funding mechanism when pharmaceutical companies offer to pick up the check, but should they pay for residency programs? Nice work I say, but watch out for that slippery slope of quid pro quo.

Nothing Is Foolproof. Fools Are So Creative.

Many of us think that a legal system gone completely nuts is a captive problem of the U.S. of A, but Australia is susceptible to the virus also. The signs all said diving was prohibited from a bridge in New South Wales, but a 14 year old ignored the signs and went off the bridge and into the river. He suffered a broken neck and sadly, is now quadriplegic. He sued the Roads and Traffic Authority and the Great Lakes Shire Council, and was awarded $1,400,000 (less 25% deducted as himself being 1/4 at fault). Why, despite the warnings was there a judgement in his favor, you ask? The argument sustained was that the signs did not state why diving was prohibited.

Be Kind To Your Inferiors, If You Can Find Any.

In April 2005, we joyously celebrated the 50th anniversary of polio vaccine. Physicians growing up, studying and practicing medicine in the latter half of the 20th century, have only a passing recognition of the uncontrollable epidemic in their own community. In 1952 alone 57,000 cases of polio were reported, and while it was known to be a viral illness, possibly transmitted by contaminated water, therapy was limited (remember the iron lung?) and protection impossible. With a great sense of relief and gratitude, the nation honored Jonas Salk, M.D. for creating a vaccine to protect our children and future generations from this dreaded disease. Salk became an instant celebrity, but at age 40 he had reached the zenith of his career. Taking all the accolades, he failed to acknowledge the work of Drs. Enders and Robbins at Harvard who isolated and grew the virus, paving the way for production. He refused to even mention the devoted team at Pittsburgh that had done the core research in producing the vaccine. He was never elected to the National Academy of Sciences and did not receive the Nobel prize. Other researchers described him as basically a technician. Moreover, the glory days for the Salk vaccine ended soon when Dr. Sabri and his team successfully administered an attenuated virus in a sugar cube, replacing the injection. Immeasurable law of behavior— it is impossible to grow taller by standing on others.

Political Intelligence Is No Match For Natural Stupidity

Obviously responding to pressure from the so-called right to life lobby, two doctor politicians, Florida representative Weldon and Senator majority leader William Frist, watched a small portion of a videotape, and announced that Terry Schiavo “can make a recovery.” Neither doctor examined the patient! Apparently, it was of no significance that competent neurologists had examined the patient and the medical records and determined that Ms. Schiavo is and has been “in a persistent vegetative state” for 15 years. The whole political flap over this tragic case, including even the poignant posturing of the President of the USA, makes one wonder where are the intelligent, insightful people who should be leading this nation.

In Houston Some Porky Patients Have A Blood Type “Ragud1”

Houston, Texas, was named as America’s fastest city, and the city fathers (and mothers) were somewhat embarrassed. So, to counter its obese reputation they put on a “Tour de Houston” bicycle event. The response was terrific as 2,300 people showed up, and contributed $50,000 to be used to upgrade the city’s parks and recreational facilities. Organizers called it a recreational race so no times were taken, and at the finish participants were served free beer and tacos, presumably to void losing Houston’s rep as adipose champion.

Definitely A BadBrains To Testosterone Level.

First, we must acknowledge that we all know of events where doctors were abusive to staff or patients. “Code Pink” a mechanism used to calm down a ranting, angry physician, was a subject of this column a few months ago. Now the physician abuse problem has been taken a step farther in Indiana. A heart surgeon was accused of “workplace bullying” and a jury awarded a technician damages of $325,000 (where did they come up with that number?). He claimed he could not work and was severely depressed because of the event. The doctor has appealed the verdict, and his attorneys assert that he is a good physician and is being victimized. The sun seems outrageous, but the underlying fact is that doctors and hospital administrators must establish, and doctors must abide by laws of behavior.

ADDENDA

- According to a Harvard Medical School study, only about 5% of all drug reactions that occur in hospitals are ever reported.
- In Rome Italy, a man told his doctor he would die within six months, was given a court date in 14 months to settle his claim against his medical insurance carrier.
- Two men were injured and one arrested in a carjacking during an Amish drag race in Elkton, Indiana.
- Moose, the Jack Russell terrier that played Eddie on the sit-com Fraser, was paid $10,800 per episode and has amassed a fortune of $3.2 million.

Awaha and keep the faith —rts

Contents of this column do not necessarily reflect the opinion or position of the Hawaii Ophthalmological Society and the Hawaii Medical Association. Editorial comment is strictly that of the writer.