
EDITORIAL

Variety and Health

The sea around South Africa is exceptionally rich in variety. We enjoy tremendous variety in habitat, fauna and flora. With the variety in peoples, beliefs and political ideologies many stop talking about natural beauty, and worry about survival. We marvel at the intricate interrelationships in the cycles of nature. The destructive propensity of man, the capacity for devastation of only a few zealots, brings deep-seated stress.

Beauty in nature is not devoid of pain. The ecology of nature depends on one species living off the other, droughts, floods, veld fires and sand-dune-moving winds. It is different with us. We kill our own in a scale not found anywhere in nature. We have the capacity, and use it, to destroy species and environments permanently, like the effect of a multitude of volcanoes. With the Bomb presently under very insecure management, we can destroy our globe.

In 1992 we face unprecedented danger and opportunity. It is up to us which we will choose. Both ways it will be a stressful year. As family physicians we will again be dealing with violent deaths, the pathologies accompanying grief and a multiplication of anxieties. In doing so, can we turn some of the fear into hope, some of the hatred into respect? Or even love? I am sure we can allow our patients to face their feelings and beliefs that are incompatible with survival.

We as family physicians can make a difference assisting towards making this land of beauty and variety a healthier place to live in.

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