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## From the editor • Van die redakteur

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### Vocational Training - So what?

South of the Du Toit's Mountains there is a small area of South Africa called the Western Cape. I know that it is there because I grew up there. I like going back there as well, as often as I can. It's a great place.

It is also the only place in the country that we know of where Pulmonary Tuberculosis is on the increase<sup>1</sup>. Herewith a few more statistics. The Cape Province has the highest per capita State expenditure on health in the country<sup>2</sup>. Two medical schools are situated in the Western Cape and consume more than half of the province's budget<sup>3</sup>. Soon the new Grootte Schuur hospital will be opened. This is bound to increase the percentage of the budget spent in the Medical Schools. I wonder if there is a geographical area in the country with a higher density of doctors per population, or more doctors doing some form of professional or vocational training?

Looking at this "association" of tuberculosis

and medical opulence and excellence, one wonders about the relevance of the medical system we have developed. Will further vocational training for general practitioners make any difference to some of the most pressing health needs of the country?

Unless vocational training for general practitioners is going to do something radically different from what our profession has been doing to date, we will remain with our present anomalies. More of the same kind of doctors will be throwing our resources to the wind.

*Sam Fehsen*

#### References:

1. Department of Health and Population Development. Epidemiological Comments 1987; 14(8): 1-40.
2. Klopper, JML, Taylor, SP. S Afr. Med J 1987; 72: 799-801.
3. Hospital and Nursing Yearbook of Southern Africa 1986.

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## Guest Editorial

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### Personal Care

'Personal' is the first adjective used in the job description of the family practitioner, whether they be a doctor or a nurse. Many of the problems brought by patients to practitioners are best understood and helped by practitioners who know patients as people, who understand their fears and feelings and know the problems in their daily lives. More and more of the principles of healthy living and much of the management of chronic disease depends upon people making changes in the way they eat, drink, smoke and exercise. Personal contact has been shown to make it easier for patients to follow medical advice. Personal preventive medicine is now a major feature of modern health services and it is logical for people

to be offered preventive services in the same place and by the same people who offer them curative services.

Because of their unique position in mobilizing hospital services for their patients, family practitioners are well placed to assess the adequacy of those services and to contribute to the planning and setting of priorities by health authorities.

- John Smith

#### Reference

The Front Line of the Health Service, Report from General Practice 25, Royal College of General Practitioners.