

From the Editor/Van die Redakteur

GP Impotence

One often hears complaints from GPs who feel oppressed and hopeless about improving their lot. Specialists control the Medical Council, the Medical Association and the Medical Schools. Decisions are thus often loaded against us. This may be so, but complaining does not seem to solve the problem. What can ? As usual, a clear problem definition helps.

Specialists form about one quarter of the SA Medical and Dental Council's register. A further quarter are probably in training for a specialty, or doing some specialist work as medical officers. Another quarter are in private general practice, and the fourth quarter, approximately, are in public sector primary care. Half, or more than half of the country's doctors are ruled by the other half, or possibly even by a minority. All people in this system have an equal vote. It needs a fair amount of apathy, discord and poor organisation for a group to achieve this amount of domination by others.

This Journal and the Academy have consistently put forward the view that all in primary care, be it private general practice of one kind or another of salaried employment, belong to the same family. They need to function with the same attitudes and skills that are being defined, taught and practiced internationally¹.

How many of us in this sector, are divided into different camps, each with its own caricature of the other to defend the boundaries. Divided we remain ineffectual. Who gets on to the Federal Council of MASA? Die mense wat werk. Is ons so geïndoktrineer deur die onderwysproses waar die

spesialiste ons leermeesters is, vir ons daarna voortgesette onderrig gee en dan daagliks vir ons moet sê hoe en wat ons moet doen? Ons sal self moet dink en doen en ons kant bring in die takrade as ons groter seggenskap wil hê binne die Vereniging. Is 2 400 lede van die Algemene Praktykgroep 'n goeie persentasie van die potensieële lede?

Ons sal meer selfstandig moet wees en werk as ons 'n groter seggenskap in ons eie toekoms wil hê. As dit lyk of die mediese Vereniging en die Algemene Praktisynsgroep net in die privaatsektor belangstel, is dit tog net die ander wat afwesig is se skuld. As mens nie daar is om jou saak te stel en jou kant te bring nie, bly ander vir jou praat en besluit.

The Academy is working hard, together with the Medical Association and others, to achieve universally available vocational training for all in primary care/family practice. The Medical Council has been considering the matter for some years now. Is this delay not also in part due to lack of a general practice presence in the Council?

Elections for Medical Council take place again this year. Will we find enough from our ranks who, despite the economic situation, will be prepared to stand for election? If they stand, will their colleagues vote for them?

We will have to stand together and work harder if we want some control over our own future.

REFERENCES:

1. Editorial. Dividing the Indivisible. *S Afr Fam Pract* 1984; 5: 308.