

## THE COLONEL

**To the Editor:** Your issue on End of Life Care (SA Fam Pract Vol 48, No 6 - July 2006) has prompted me to document this experience from the mid eighties.

Colonel X now retired and in his eighties, had been a high ranking officer in the British Indian Army. He was a small man but in his prime had been, from all accounts, a strict authoritarian, with a strong imposing character and cut an impressive figure in his full uniform with all his decorations. He had never married and had no relatives in South Africa. He was now in hospital with chronic renal failure and very diminished and no longer the imposing professional soldier he had been.

One night, at about 11 o'clock, I was doing a late visit to check on his condition. As I came down the corridor, I could hear soft singing. I stormed into the ward, ready to tear a strip off whoever still had a radio going at that time of night. I realised that the singing was coming from Colonel X's room. I walked in and there he was, cradled in the arms of the ward nurse. She was a big black over-weight midwife, and had taken her shoes off and was sitting on the bed with the Colonel's upper body in her arms and was crooning a traditional lullaby

The look on Colonel X's face was more peaceful than it had been for weeks. I tiptoed out. I later asked why she had done this. She replied "But he was crying!"

I am sure this loving action did more for Colonel X's comfort and peace of mind than all the medicines and supportive treatment I had given him or could give him.

**Pierre Jaques**

## ADVERTISING IN SA FAMILY PRACTICE

**To the Editor:** You lack the editorial (read financial if you must) courage to relegate advertisements to the front or end pages of the Journal, which results in having to include a couple of full-page adverts when tearing out to save an article. Now you adulterate articles even further by inserting into their very columns seductive little box adverts. When I complained about disguised adverts you introduced "advertorials" - what are you going to call these ploys? I refer to pages 24, 25 and 29 of the July issue. Do authors know they will be used like this?

At the same time, however, I want to say that the article thus infringed, titled "Making Decisions with Families at the End of Life"<sup>1</sup>, is brilliant; every paragraph is rich in

perception and practicality.

It is not only a "must read" but a "must keep to use".

**Ronald Ingle**  
Pretoria North

**Comment by the Editor:** We appreciate Dr. Ingle's well meant remarks. Advertising in scholarly journals remains a contentious issue. Most journals find it unavoidable to place advertising in order to supplement income, and make publishing of the journal possible. Without advertising income, and enough of it, the South African Family Practice journal would not exist. Membership and subscriptions are by far not enough to cover all the costs of publishing the journal. The vast majority of our readers have no complaints about the placement of our advertising but we do accept the fact that some individuals may feel different. Dr. Ingle will be glad to know that the journal has published a draft advertising policy on its website homepage; we will appreciate all input from our readers.