

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Health in schools

The problem of doctors' employment has of late been a burning issue. The matter seems to be a perplexing one. In a country which reportedly has only one doctor for about 8 to 9 thousand people on average, unemployment of doctors is almost unbelievable. But in reality we are now faced with that unbelievable thing.

No matter if the number of doctors is sufficient or not in our country in proportion to the size of our population, the fact is that the annual supply of our qualified doctors (who are obtaining MBBS Degree every year from our medical colleges) is more than our present official capacity to absorb them in the existing posts lying vacant or newly created. And it is clear that unless a sufficient number of new posts are created every year, it is not possible to absorb all the new doctors coming out regu-

larly from the medical colleges.

The authorities concerned, of course, could perceive the gravity of the problem and, therefore, decided to remove all the obstacles put on the way of doctors' going abroad. But we think this step only would not prove to be sufficient to solve this problem. So far as it is understood now the demand for doctors going abroad is not as high as it was expected to be, though it might be increased considerably if concerted actions are taken from all concerned. But there is, perhaps, little scope to expect much from this programme (exporting of doctors).

It is, therefore, wise probably, to consider how much of the new doctors could be employed internally. In this regard I like to put forward a suggestion to be considered seriously by all. School or student health hazard is a long standing problem in our country. There is no denying that most of our students, as they generally come from the poor or the low income group of family, are hardly taken a pro-

per health care of. The question of proper nourishment or sufficient diet also does not arise. But even the dangerous type of killer diseases remain undetected among the students ultimately to bring about a fatal or unfortunate outcome. Even some very common preventive measures against TB, typhoid, diphtheria, whooping-cough, cholera, pox etc are not given to our young school children in the vast rural areas (and also in urban areas) because of insufficient arrangement and the guardians' lack of knowledge and care.

Under the circumstances we feel that doctors should be employed in all the schools—both private and public either on behalf of the government or the school authority. In some cases one doctor may be appointed for three to five school (or more than that) considering their pupil-strength, locality and also the financial conditions. These doctors would not only look after the emergency problem of the students or make an arrangement for their regular health check-up but also should see so that

as much free medicine (essential but less costly) as possible can be arranged for them.

In this way we think that on the one hand the employment problem of our doctors may be lessened to some extent and the health hazard of the students may be minimised on the other.

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