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Along the IV trail

Sir,

Questions. In your recent editorial on intravenous antibiotic treatment you ask why 'most of the children in the ward are trailing behind them infusion sets which are delivering intravenous antibiotics as they stroll around the ward?' And, why have there been no comments and response to editorial requests from eminent clinical pharmacologists on the situation?¹

Answers. (1) Money—that is the influence of marketing, both advertising and more entangling promotion including support for research, meetings etc. In fact, the same motivation that has led the *Archives* into the questionable path of endorsement by association in its policy of including advertising. (2) Technical control—modern style allopathy, which is the main theme of western medicine may be defined as a system that reacts vigorously after an illness has developed, preferably dramatically and ideally with maximum technology. This is automatically considered as more scientific and also gives the health staff both control and status.

The situation parallels the over use of total parenteral nutrition. Intravenous infusions of nutrients and antibiotics obviously have important life saving roles in special circumstances. Their excessive use reflects commercial influence and technological hubris. The oral route is humdrum and boringly old fashioned. After all, why use the mouth if a vein is available?

Reference

- ¹ Anonymous. Editorial. *Arch Dis Child* 1983; **58**: 161.

DERRICK B JELLIFFE AND E F PATRICE JELLIFFE
*Division of Population and Family Health,
 School of Public Health,
 University of California,
 Los Angeles,
 California 90024,
 USA*