

CMAJ awards more free subscriptions based on reader nominations

In September 1998, *CMAJ* asked readers to recommend hospitals or other institutions that might benefit from free subscriptions to *CMAJ* and the *Canadian Journal of Surgery (CJS)*. We repeated the exercise last fall, and thanks to recommendations from readers, doctors at hospitals in Cuba, Ecuador, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Nigeria and Pakistan will soon be receiving free 3-year subscriptions to the 2 journals.

The gifts are an attempt by the CMA to provide better access to health information to physicians in the developing world (see Haddad H, MacLeod S. Access to medical and health information in the developing world: an essential tool for change in medical education. *CMAJ* 1999;160[1]:63-4).

Many Canadian doctors appear to appreciate the effort. "When I toured India a few years ago, I was impressed by how much is done with so little," explained Dr. Shelley Ross of Burnaby, BC. "When we sit and complain about our outdated facilities, we have not seen how the rest of the world lives."

Ross, president-elect of the Medical Women's International Association, recommended subscriptions for the

Mission Hospital in Calcutta run by the West Bengal Branch of the Association of Medical Women in India. The hospital, which opened in 1981, caters to women and young children with no way to pay for treatment. "With scant resources," says Ross, "the hospital runs a labour ward, operating theatre and emergency department, and provides services in internal medicine, cardiology and surgery." She noted that the ophthalmology department closed because it lacked proper equipment.

"The staff donate their time, but there is so much more they could do with more equipment. When I spoke to Dr. Tulsi Basu, the physician in charge, about the possibility of receiving *CMAJ* and *CJS*, she was very excited."

The Lion's Sight First Eye Hospital in Lilongwe, Malawi, will be receiving free subscriptions thanks to Noel Corser of Calgary. "The medical literature available in Lilongwe is exceedingly scarce and consists almost entirely of odd copies of journals left by visiting physicians from outside the country," he wrote. "However, while the facilities here are modest by North American standards, the level of care is truly re-



A doctor conducts an examination at the Lion's Sight First Eye Hospital in Lilongwe, Malawi

markable and this is one of the busiest training centres in Central Africa."

Toronto psychiatrist Donald Payne noted that one of the 1999 recipients of free subscriptions, Queen Elizabeth Central Hospital in Blantyre, Malawi, graduated its first class of 20 doctors who were fully trained in Malawi last August. "In the past, Malawi medical students had to take some or all of their training abroad. Although the need is great, enrolment has been limited to 20 students in order to maintain a high quality of education. Malawi [in Central Africa] is one of the world's poorest countries, and your gift subscriptions help maintain the high standards of their educational program."

The other hospitals to be awarded subscriptions are: Hospital Vozandes in Quito, Ecuador (nominated by Dr. Paul Roberts, Markham, Ont.); Madonna Hospital, Makurdi, Nigeria (Dr. Muri Abdurrahman, Toronto); Al-Junaid Hospital, Nowshera, Pakistan (Dr. R.M. Nizami, Richmond Hill, Ont.); and Immanuel Hospital, Mulia, Irian Jaya, Indonesia (Dr. Ken Dresser, Toronto).

The CMA is also presenting special awards to the Apostolic Church in Ghana to help promote rural health education in that West African country, and to the Provincial Medical Sciences Information Centre in Holguin, Cuba, in order to help update the library there. — *Patrick Sullivan, CMAJ*



Dr. Tulsi Basu administers anesthetic at Calcutta's Mission Hospital