

## Correspondance

stethoscopes in the traditional manner (and their baseball caps forward).

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### Lest we forget

I read with considerable interest the letter from Siroos Mirzaei and Peter Knoll drawing attention to the treatment of physicians in Iraq who refused to be involved in torture.<sup>1</sup> It is unfortunate that they did not name the physician who was executed for refusing to exercise medicine punitively. He must have espoused the highest Hippocratic ideals to give his life rather than inflict pain on another person. This man should be honoured by remembrances and scholarships. How many of us would give our lives in such a sacrifice?

**Alan L. Russell**

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#### Reference

1. Mirzaei S, Knoll P. The last trial of a Nazi doctor [letter]. *CMAJ* 2000;163(5):498,500.

#### [The authors respond:]

The name of the Iraqi physician who was executed was not stated in the Amnesty International report in which the incident was mentioned.<sup>1</sup> However, the names of many other health care professionals at risk have been published.<sup>2,3</sup> For example, the Turkish Medical Association has protested against torture and executions, and several of its members have been threatened with imprisonment, including Veli Lök.<sup>2</sup> A Romanian physician, Atilla Kun, refused to cover up incidents of torture and was sent to prison for 3 years.<sup>3</sup>

Many physicians uphold the Hippo-

cratic oath in the face of imprisonment, mistreatment and even execution. Their courage, will and struggles have to be honoured, but not by scholarships. Rather, we should try to understand why physicians have faced human rights violations and we should work to help our colleagues who are presently at risk. The best way to honour them is to share their sense of responsibility to uphold the Hippocratic oath.

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#### References

1. Amnesty International. Amputations and branding; detention of health professionals. London: Amnesty International; 1994. Report no.: MDE

14/13/94.

2. Welsh J. Health workers at risk. *Lancet* 2000;356(9228):503.
3. Amnesty International. Harming the healers: violations of the human rights of health professionals. London: Amnesty International; 2000. Report no.: ACT 75/02/00.
4. Amnesty International Medical Commission, Marange V. *Doctors and torture: collaboration or resistance?* Paris: Bellew Publishing; 1991.

#### [Editors' note:]

Information on human rights issues particularly relevant to health care workers is available through Amnesty International Health Professionals Network Online ([www.web.amnesty.org/rmp/hponline.nsf](http://www.web.amnesty.org/rmp/hponline.nsf)).

### Cervical manipulation: How risky is it?

The article by John Norris and colleagues on sudden neck movement and cervical artery dissection does not mention risk factors for stroke such