



## US antiabortion pamphlet stirs anger north of border

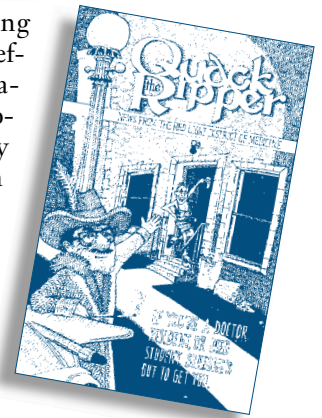
An American antiabortion publication that was mailed to Canadian physicians has angered many Ontario doctors and caused Queen's University to contact police. The 32-page pamphlet, *Quack the Ripper*, was mailed by Life Dynamics Inc. of Denton, Texas, in March. Many of the recipients at Queen's were residents; the publication's goal is to dissuade young physicians from providing abortions by insulting those who do perform them. "The resident who showed it to me was very upset and concerned that her name and address was accessible to such an outfit," said Dr. Susan Phillips, a family physician in Kingston, Ont., who was "disgusted" by the pamphlet.

Jim Maclean, spokesperson for the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario, said the college has received complaints from physicians throughout the province, where recipients ranged from pediatricians and internists to residents; some doctors in Saskatchewan also received it. Maclean said the college had sent a complaint to Toronto police and the Ontario Provincial Police. He was not surprised by the pamphlet, which he said contained "a thinly veiled" threat. He described those who sent it as "buzzards."

Frank Crutcher, the president of Life Dynamics, would not discuss the pamphlet unless *CMAJ* signed an agreement "stating that all responses given will be published in their entirety, unedited, and within context. We will consider waiving that requirement if you provide references from 3 pro-life organizations stating that you and your publication have a documented history of fair and accurate reporting on the abortion issue."

He said the group adopted the policy because of the "incompetence, dishonesty and pro-abortion bias that so thoroughly dominates contemporary journalism." *CMAJ* declined to meet the group's demands.

Dr. Ruth Wilson, the head of family medicine at Queen's, said all of her residents received the pamphlet. "This kind of hate-mongering propaganda is deeply disturbing," she said. — *Patrick Sullivan*



## Be careful who you marry, female physicians warned

Advice that they shouldn't "marry for passion" was among the messages handed down to a group of medical students and residents during a recent Ottawa seminar on surviving life as a female physician. The point of the inflammatory statement, made by a physician in the audience, was that their choice of mate may be the key to letting them balance life at home, at work and in the community while leaving some time for themselves.

During a panel presentation, sponsored by the Federation of Medical Women of Canada, 3 physicians offered the young trainees insight into 3 very different professional routes they could follow.

"Life is about choices," said Dr. Joan Whitfield, a full-time pediatrician and mother of 2 grown children. She moved from academia to community-based medicine in order to

have more time for her children. She also employed a full-time housekeeper for 21 years and arranged with her 2 partners not to have on-call duties until her youngest child was 5. She takes a month off each year, to give herself some "real time."

Dr. Linda Wynne, a full-time, single anesthetist who loves to travel, made a pitch for anesthesia as the career for "people who want more to life than work." The British-born physician, who practises at Ottawa's Grace Hospital, has worked as a general practitioner but found that "whole days would go by and I wouldn't know what was wrong with anyone." She said she gets a lot of satisfaction from relieving pain — she has a subspecialty in pain management — but the lifestyle is also attractive because "the work ends when I go home." She takes 3

fairly long holidays every year.

Dr. Denise Werker, meanwhile, explained how she had switched from family medicine to epidemiology and a position with a field epidemiology training program at Health Canada. She began with a family practice in British Columbia — this included stints as the physician for high-level treks in Nepal — and then earned her master's degree in epidemiology and obtained specialty training in public health. After several years of field work abroad, she married and moved to Ottawa. Werker, who was 36 weeks' pregnant when she began work at Health Canada, has a 2-year-old son.

"Survival isn't good enough," she emphasized. "You need to be fulfilled. When you're choosing where to go with your career, look into your heart." — *Barbara Sibbald*