

of British Columbia Department of Pharmacology and Therapeutics, he did not mention his involvement with the Therapeutics Initiative, which is supported by BC Pharmacare. This represents a significant conflict of interest that should have been disclosed. The concomitant presentation of a contrary viewpoint would also have been welcome.

#### Walter P. Maksymowych

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#### Reference

1. Wright JM. The double-edged sword of COX-2 selective NSAIDs. *CMAJ* 2002;167(10):1131-7.

*Competing interests:* Dr. Maksymowych has received speaker fees from Merck and educational grants from Aventis.

#### [The author responds:]

**M**y article on cyclooxygenase-2 NSAIDs<sup>1</sup> represents data from randomized controlled trials and my own personal interpretation of those data. I am the managing director of the Therapeutics Initiative, which holds as one of its primary tenets the maintenance of independence from government and other vested interest groups. This independence is achieved in part by a 5-year grant funding arrangement administered by the University of

British Columbia and by restriction of membership on decision-making committees and working groups to people who are not employed by government or the drug industry. To maintain credibility as a source of evidence-based information, the Therapeutics Initiative follows the rule that all those involved, whether they are researching and producing reports, preparing and disseminating educational material, or voting on committee decisions, must have no competing interests.

#### James M. Wright

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#### Reference

1. Wright JM. The double-edged sword of COX-2 selective NSAIDs. *CMAJ* 2002;167(10):1131-7.

#### Is nothing sacred?

**T**he Ezekiel name comes from a long and distinguished lineage of Iraqi Jews who lived in Baghdad for more than a thousand years before being dispersed around the world in the early part of the 20th century. Physicians, attorneys, merchants, scientists, bankers, professors and rabbis have proudly borne the name.

Alas, I now discover that one "Eu-

gene," the anatomy lab technician depicted in Ronald Ruskin's story about medical school,<sup>1</sup> chose the name Ezekiel for the orangutan skeleton that hung in the laboratory. Ah, the ignobility of it all. I can only hope that Ezekiel the orangutan was a giant among primates.

#### Dan Ezekiel

Physician  
Vancouver, BC

#### Reference

1. Ruskin R. The anatomy museum. *CMAJ* 2003;168(2):203-4.

#### [The author responds:]

**D**an Ezekiel points out that his surname comes from "a long and distinguished lineage." The same cannot be said for the Ezekiel in my recent story,<sup>1</sup> whose origins remain unknown.

As Dr. Ezekiel no doubt knows, his name can be traced to the 6th-century BC Hebrew prophet who wrote that "The hand of the Lord came upon me, and he carried me out by his spirit and put me down in a plain full of bones" (Ezekiel 37:1).

I can assure Dr. Ezekiel that Ezekiel the orangutan skeleton was indeed a great character. He watched over young and anxious medical students struggling with Death, Anatomy, and *Grant's Atlas*. His bones showed us the spaces between life and death; his primate image floating before our eyes showed us our past and our future.

#### Ronald Ruskin

Staff Psychiatrist  
Mount Sinai Hospital  
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#### Reference

1. Ruskin R. The anatomy museum. *CMAJ* 2003;168(2):203-4.

#### A national drug agency

**L**ike the editors of *CMAJ*,<sup>1</sup> we strongly support the Romanow Commission's recommendation for a

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