IDRC public scandal: phase 2

Phase 1 of the IDRC (International Development Research Centre) public scandal was the presence of a representative of the tobacco industry as chair of its Board (as Barbara McDougall was until March 2010).1 Phase 2 requires a question nobody asks: What did IDRC do with the Gates Foundation money under McDougall’s stewardship? What did IDRC do with the $3 505 535 that was not allocated to African grantees?

On December 2007, the Gates Foundation awarded $5 274 477 to IDRC to promote tobacco control in Africa. At the same time, McDougall, who was a Director of Imperial Tobacco Canada Ltd., became chair of the IDRC Board of Governors. Under her chairmanship, the African grantees apparently received $1 768 942, which represents between 30% and 33% of the grant awarded by the Gates Foundation. What happened to the remaining 67%?

Véronique Le Clezio
President, ViSa Mauritius, Floréal, Mauritius

REFERENCE
1. Hébert PC, Reddy KS, Jha P. Canada’s perceived lack of leadership on global tobacco control. CMAJ 2010;182:E427

Preoperative marking of limbs

Knight and Wedge illustrate an important and familiar problem with marking limbs preoperatively with arrows or symmetric symbols.1 I have taken to marking limbs with either my initials or my signature. I insist that residents under supervision do this before I check the patient. Thus, even if the signature is barely legible, its owner, who is also the operating surgeon, can determine which is the original signature and which is the transferred mirror image.

I encourage each operating surgeon to consider this approach as a practical and safe marking method.

John A. Haggie MB ChB MD
Chief of Surgery, James Paton Memorial Hospital, Gander, NL

REFERENCE

Multiple sclerosis: liberation procedure

I saw Dr. Paul Hébert on Global National talking about Zamboni’s work1,2 as dilating veins in the brain. This is false: angioplasty is done on the jugular veins in the neck and the azygos vein in the chest. How do I know? Because I had this done in Poland a month ago. The next time someone talks about a medical procedure, perhaps he or she should have the facts straight first.

Jason Kaye
Sherwood Park. Alta.

REFERENCE
1. Stanbrook MB, Hébert PC. Access to treatment for multiple sclerosis must be based on science, not hope. CMAJ 2010;182:1151

Quality evidence important for quality guidelines

AGREE 1,2 focuses on methodologic issues about guideline development and reporting. Although important, these issues are insufficient to ensure that...