



April 9, 2002

Mr S R Molesworth AM
National Chairman
ME/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome
Association of Australia
19 Linacre Road
HAMPTON VIC 3188

Dear Mr Molesworth,

Re: RACP Chronic Fatigue Syndrome Practice Guidelines

Many thanks for your letter dated March 7, 2002 and its evidential supplement dated March 8, 2002. Your letter outlines the reservations of your Association about the guidelines and a request not to publish the same.

Allow me to comment on divergent opinions in guidelines developments. Committees convened to develop guidelines or position statements do not always achieve complete consensus as poignantly illustrated in an article the Journal recently published (MJA 2002; 176: 332 – 334). Committees have to make judgements on the strength of published evidence and this process is but human but it is the only vehicle we have at this time. Of course your Association may register its concern with the guidelines to the Committee but to take on the role of a censor and ask a Journal to desist from publication is unprecedented in scientific and clinical publishing in Australia.

I have forwarded your concerns to the President of the Royal Australasian College of Physicians and Chairman of the Committee.

It is the intention of the MJA to publish the Clinical Guidelines both in the MJA and the eMJA www.mja.com.au. The Journal will also publish after the guidelines publication evidence-based *Letters to the Editor* on the Web or in the print version, but these will undergo the usual Editorial processes. This I believe is the most appropriate way forward.

You and your association/s will have the opportunity to argue not anecdotally but with peer reviewed evidence your Association's divergence from the content of the guidelines.

Your interest in this matter is appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Martin Van Der Weyden MD FRACP FRCPA
Editor
The Medical Journal of Australia