pharmaceuticals (pharamacoepidemiology) will help develop local understanding of how the population responds and reacts: ethnic differences in how drugs are handled call for different regulatory attitudes and this can only be understood by careful observation and collection of data in the local environment. The practice of good medicine is within the reach of us all.

It is not necessarily expensive to apply good basic practices, but it is certainly wasteful to ignore them.

This issue of *Current Science* is an education in itself and should be studied not only by all scientists in India who are working or hope to work in the health care field, but by those in the West as well so that they can come to understand India's vast problems and how they can best direct their energies to allow India to develop its own strategy for improving health care, and, where appropriate, to inject help and finance to ensure that the direction is right.

D. M. BURLEY

In one of the articles in this interesting issue (vol. 60, no. 4), M. D. Nair states: Much has been written in recent times about the great divide between the 'developed' and 'developing countries'. He is right in many ways as shown by the data presented by him. However, on reading this special issue 'Clinical research and health care delivery in developing countries', I do not think such a divide exists in the quality of the articles. The Indian contingent emerges creditably.

My attention was drawn to the articles written on clinical trial methodology and development of drugs (medicines). The articles are concise and written with remarkable knowledge. They demonstrate the wide gap in the criteria and standards of drug development between the 'developed' and 'developing countries'.

I hope that the Menon Foundation will persist in its pioneering efforts to arouse public awareness, assure consumer protection and provide leadership in this crucial area of health care in India. Perhaps, more attention should also be paid in India and other developing countries to the Declaration of Helsinki and guidelines for Good Clinical Practice. B. H. Smith's conclusion is worth nothing: '... There are many good things about the US system for drug development and regulation, but the system taken as a whole is not suitable for the developing world. Keeping the good parts, the developing world must devise new systems suited to their needs and realities.' G. N. Menon states that the current policy of inadequate, inappropriate and irrational adaptations of models of the developed world... is fundamentally flawed. I agree with both.

The editors deserve credit for their excellent joint editorial effort which is best seen in their thought-provoking 'Foreword'. I must also commend the editors for the layout of this special issue which is elegant.

W. M. ROSINGA

NEWS

Deep-mine facility a gold mine, says meeting

DST's Programme Advisory Committee (PAC) on plasma, high-energy and nuclear physics has reviewed the current status of non-accelerator particle physics and has concluded that continued access to low-background-radiation facilities, such as the one in the deep mines of Kolar Gold Fields (KGF), is important. A meeting of the PAC on 10 and 11 July in New Delhi approved a resolution that urges the Department of Science and Technology (DST) to take immediate steps to encourage work in non-accelerator particle physics and to preserve the deep mines at KGF.

The PACs, several in each broad area, such as the physical sciences, are part of DST's effort to focus research effort. The Science and Engineering Research Council (SERC), set up by DST in 1974, has identified several thrust areas of research in different fields. The review and recommendations of SERC's national seminar on 'challenging areas in physical sciences' (Shantiniketan, 23–25 February 1989) also drew attention to the importance of KGF (see Supplement to *Current Science*, 10 June 1990).

The following is the resolution approved on 11 July.

Continued availability of Kolar gold mines for national and international research programmes in the field of non-accelerator particle physics

Study of elementary particles and physics away from man-made high-energy particle accelerators is rapidly gaining in prominence and importance again after a period of nearly 30 years. Not only do these experiments have a high intellectual content but also they are often the only means of study of the theoretical ideas beyond the standard model for the elementary particles. These experiments invariably need an environment with very low background of stray radiations, as the one uniquely provided by deep mines such as the gold mines in Kolar, which are one of the deepest in the world. Efforts elsewhere in the world are actively being directed towards the development of such facilities by extensive tunnelling under high mountains. Non-accelerator particle physics is particularly relevant in the Indian context as our scientists do not have immediate access to high-energy accelerators and because it can provide to the enthusiastic young scientists here an opportunity to do pioneering work with modest expenditure. After a detailed review of the highlights of current studies in the area of non-accelerator particle physics, the Programme Advisory Committee formally records here the great scientific importance of these studies and enjoins the Department of Science and Technology to take such steps as necessary to:

a) foster and encourage work in this area of study,

b) keep the deep mines accessible to scientists to continue ongoing experiments,

c) support new experimental activity by augmenting the existing facilities,

d) enable the physics community in India to present Kolar Gold Fields as a major experimental facility available to the world community of scientists, and

e) preserve for the future generation of scientists the Kolar mines which are really to be regarded as a national heritage and indeed for all of mankind.