

case for next issue

Call for Responses

The case outlined below will be the basis for the In That Case section for the next issue of the *New Zealand Bioethics Journal*. We invite interested readers to provide commentaries for possible publication. Responses should be kept to approximately 500-700 words in length. The editorial board will select the responses to be published in the October 2002

issue of the *New Zealand Bioethics Journal*. We also reserve the right to edit contributions, to avoid repetition of points for example. All editorial changes will be cleared with the authors before going to press. Contributions can be sent by email or by posting a copy to the Editor. Please include your name, address and phone number with your response.

Mrs A and her husband, Mr A, consulted different GPs at the same medical centre. Mr A was diagnosed with gonorrhoea while working overseas. He called his doctor in New Zealand (Dr B) anxious for his wife to have a medical check, but concerned that his own condition be kept secret.

Mr A told his wife he had a fungal infection and she was examined by her doctor (Dr C) who took cervical and vaginal swabs. Dr C said the practice would be in touch if the test results were untoward.

At a subsequent practice meeting, Dr B told Dr C about the husband's gonorrhoea and the request for secrecy. Two days later the wife's lab results were reported as positive for amoxicillin-sensitive gonorrhoea. Dr C rang and left a message on Mrs A's answer phone saying she had a bacterial infection that needed antibiotic treatment. In a later phone conversation with Dr C, Mrs A was told she had "an infection" and that she should have more swabs after completing a course of antibiotics.

Eventually Mrs A found out from the practice nurse the nature of the STD, and Dr C followed up by phoning Mrs A and explaining that she had contracted gonorrhoea. When Mrs A asked if her husband could have been unfaithful, Dr C said he might have caught the infection from a toilet seat.

Unhappy with this explanation, Mrs A contacted a sexual health clinic, and was told that the toilet seat advice was incorrect and the 10-day amoxicillin treatment was not current recommended treatment.

The material for this case was provided by the Health and Disability Commissioner and based on a recently reported case.