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 2003 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.

A pharmaceutical company that makes generic versions of commonly used drugs has produced a generic of a proprietary drug widely prescribed in a particular service. Pharmac (The Pharmaceutical Management Agency in New Zealand set up to manage government expenditure on drugs) currently pays $100 (per tablet) to buy the proprietary version of this drug. The newly produced generic version costs $33. However, Pharmac is unlikely to buy the generic as its equivalence is not clearly established.

During a routine visit to a hospital unit, a drug rep from the company offers a special deal. If the unit buys the generic version of the drug then the company will give the difference in price directly to the unit. Given the high use of the proprietary drug, the financial benefits to the unit would be considerable.

The staff are very excited about this possibility, given the inadequate level of funding in their speciality, but are wary about getting involved. The extra income could make a genuine difference in the provision of the service in question in the region, and improve staff conditions.