



Although the value of traditional medicine is sometimes disputed, the majority of patients in areas such as ours visit a traditional healer before attending an allopathic practitioner and they must frequently be satisfied with the results as there is no shortage of either traditional healers or stalls selling plant products in our markets. It is premature to consider these products to be of no medicinal value until their actions have been tested.

## Martin Dedicoat

*Hlabisa Hospital  
Private Bag X5001  
Hlabisa  
3937*

1. Van Wyk BE, Van Outdshoorn B, Gericke N. *Medicinal Plants of South Africa*. Pretoria: Briza Publications, 2000.

## HPCSA – and now the sound of music

**To the Editor:** The following is a record of my experience when phoning the Health Professions Council (HPCSA) at the end of March to find out whether the new CPD points system was fully operational, and if not about the date for submission of CPD certificates.

### 22 March

*09h00.* An automatic voice assured me that my call was valuable and would be answered. A second voice told me that there were 9 calls ahead of mine. A third voice told me the answer to the above question, which I was about to ask, and said 'The date for submission of CPD certificates has been extended to 30 June'. However I decided I had better confirm

this with an official, so I held on. Thirty minutes later the first voice said that there were 5 calls ahead. I could not wait any longer, so rang off.

*11h00.* I tried again. Same routine, with apologies for the delay due to its being peak period. The second voice said that there were 11 calls ahead. I rang off straight away.

### 23 March

*08h45.* Same routine. Still peak period, and 19 calls ahead. I rang off.

*13h07.* Peak period and 5 calls ahead, but in desperation I decided to wait. The first voice repeated the apology and peak-time message very frequently.

*13h20.* Now 3 calls ahead. All three voices then gave up, and there was only music from then on.

*13h30.* Esther answered and said she would put me through to the CPD division. More music, no voices.

*13h35.* Esther returned and said that the message about 30 June was for last year! She also said that the CPD system was not working and so they could not answer the telephone!

She said, however, that she had found out that the submission date had been postponed indefinitely, and that we would be notified when the time came.

The cost of my telephone calls was R35.

### Owen Owendale

*12 Tercentenary Way  
Glenridge  
Simon's Town  
7975*