

Correspondence

To the Editors:

Distressed children at operating theatres

A recent letter in the *CMJ* highlights the important issue of psychological trauma in children undergoing surgery. I have witnessed another common but pathetic sight in operation theatres of Sri Lanka. That is the desperate attempts of helpless mothers to console their hungry children while waiting for their turn in the operating schedule. In the civilised world it is customary to operate on small children as the first patients in the operating list irrespective of the type and nature of the operation. Many of us seem to pay little attention to this humane gesture and

keep small children fasting for long periods unnecessarily. Every member of anaesthetic and surgical teams should be made aware of this tradition. Health policy planners, if keen on children's welfare can go a step further and make it a regulation rather than tradition.

References

1. Kuruppuarachchi KALA. Hospital admissions of children and psychological trauma. *Ceylon Medical Journal* 2002; **47**: 104-5.

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