LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Small rewards for accident and emergency medicine

Sir

I would draw your attention to a recent (1986) letter in your contemporary publication: 'Is emergency medicine built to self-destruct by 1992?' by Doctors Wesserberger & Ordog from Los Angeles (*Annals of Emergency Medicine* 15, 603).

In pointing out the particular strains and stresses of our specialty and their unrelenting nature, the authors write, 'As our specialty matures during this decade, so will our highly-trained, board-certified members age and (they will) become less able to endure the daily stresses and demands of our specialty. The elite of our number have become entrepreneurs and no longer see patients. Some of us have retired into "teaching", others into administration. . .' I feel sure that the comments that Doctors Wesserberger & Ordog make are equally valid on this side of the Atlantic. Demands on our specialty are considerable in excess of any other in which I have worked and the rewards, whether financial or in terms of prestige, are small.

Might I suggest that automatic retirement on full pension at 50 and an automatic A-Merit award on reaching the top of the incremental salary scale for consultants are no more than is appropriate for accident and emergency specialists.

I should be interested to know if any of your other readers have a view on this matter.

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