of the utilisation indices and the outcome profile of the hospital and then benchmark these data with that of similar sized service and civil hospitals, before commenting on the efficiency of patient care being delivered. I congratulate the author for bringing out the tremendous wastage of scarce resources due to admissions for medical board,

which needs to be addressed by our service HQ.

Lt Col Abhijit Chakravarty

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Reply

Dear Editor,

1. We are thankful to the readers of MJAFI for their comments on the article "For whom do we toil".

2. Various complex indices, incorporating a number of variables, are available for studying the utilization of hospital services. The types of variables one wishes to analyze determine selection of an index for a particular study. Average length of stay is an index extensively used in the service hospitals. The utility of this index is in its simplicity. This index can be applied where one wishes to neutralize the effects of various unconnected variables. Since our study was based on the data of a general hospital, providing primary and secondary health care to a wide range of patients, this simple index was chosen.

3. Adjusting the outcome as per the types of cases is an index better used at speciality centres to compare various treatment modalities. We agree with the comment, that low mortality figures in our study represent the outcome measure. Our study was aimed at analysing the outcome of patients in a general hospital and not at a

speciality centre.

4. The scope of our study was limited to one service hospital only. The suggestion of comparing the utilization and outcome indices of various service and civil hospitals is very good. We will keep it in mind in formulating further studies.

5. Our observations are based on the data of our hospital. Increase in the number of ex-servicemen and their families is undisputed. These are our clients and we are sure that for medical facilities, whenever required, they look towards service hospitals. We do not have access to the national level data on the total number of ex-servicemen and their dependants' utilization of hospital services. The reader too has not provided any statistics. Therefore it is not possible to reply to the comment.

Lt Col BP Singh

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