



Natalie Smith

Medical advertising in 1970s Australia: an exploration of the MD Australia journal

About 'the trade of advertising': "But as every art ought to be exercised in due subordination to the public good, I cannot but propose as a moral question to those masters of the public ear, whether they do not sometimes play too wantonly with our passions?" Samuel Johnson, *The Idler*, 20 January 1759

MD Australia was a journal published monthly from 1 April 1971 –31 December 1974 inclusive. A total of 45 issues were produced, each with approximately 45 pages. The journal was catholic and philosophic in its content, with issue themes including the psychology of humour, advertising, the theatre, and the automobile. Regular sections included 'medicine in the world', 'medicine in the arts', and 'the world of medicine'. It was the local version of a publication that was also produced internationally. The Editor-in-Chief, who appears to have responsible for most of the content, was Felix Marti-Ibanez. It was published by MD Publications, 23 Chandos St, St Leonards NSW, and printed in Hong Kong. The publication itself is not well known and has not been previously investigated to this author's knowledge. As a window to the early 1970s, it offers the opportunity for insights into medical publishing history in Australia. The journals contained medical advertising marketed to physicians. This paper will consider the relevant social and regulatory background of the 1970s and present a number of different theoretical and conceptual perspectives for analysis of medical advertising to physicians. The overall study question is: what was the nature / characteristics of medical advertising to physicians in the early 1970s? As direct primary sources, the advertisements appearing in the first and last six issues of the journal will be manually examined.