

**Consultant 131**

3 October 2012

Dear Sir /Madam

I am writing to express my concerns regarding the current practice of some medical insurance companies. I am aware the competition commission are looking into these matters.

Fees for operative procedures are fixed by the insurance companies acting in a de facto cartel. The remuneration for operative procedures has not increased for more than 10 years. In the case of BUPA if a consultant chooses to bill in excess of the fee they are effectively removed from a BUPA partnership scheme and I suspect are subtly removed from the list of BUPA preferred providers.

BUPA have recently significantly reduced remuneration for the procedure of grommet insertion. It is no longer worthwhile from a business perspective to offer patients this procedure. If I were to charge the patient the excess to uplift to the value of the original remuneration levels I believe BUPA would remove me from their Partnership agreement. I am aware of consultants to whom this has happened. I now suggest that patients await the procedure as an NHS patient - thereby sadly removing patient choice.