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Editorial

THE NEW SMJ

This first issue of the 1997 SMJ arrives on your table with haste and anticipation. Besides the new cover and new format, the new SMJ marks a significant milestone in the history of the Singapore Medical Association with the merger of the SMJ and the SMA Newsletter.

Historically, the SMJ was founded in March 1960 with Dr Gwee Ah Leng as the first editor. The SMA Newsletter was started in August 1966 by Dr Arthur Lim who wanted "to run it on the lines of Reuters, i.e. report news and events without comment. Personal views would be recorded as such".

The combined publication is a consequence of several developments. Firstly, the Journal and Newsletter will not need to compete for advertisements. Secondly, rising cost of publication and postage are important economic considerations. Thirdly, the new SMJ with a new format will attract a wider readership. The old SMJ was a bi-monthly journal and the backlog of articles means a monthly publication is necessary.

The new SMJ has two new broad sections - the scientific section is the expanded content of the old SMJ and the news section is from the Newsletter. The Editorial Board now includes two deputy editors, Dr Sonny Wang for the scientific section and A/Prof Goh Lee Gan for the news section.

In the scientific section, apart from the editorial, review, original articles and letters, it is felt that a column on Education will be useful for members. For a start, short articles on current medical practice and case conference are included to update knowledge on diagnostic and management skills. Dr Lim Lean Huat has been appointed the sub-editor of this column.

The SMA Newsletter section will remain essentially the same in content and the editorial is renamed, Commentary. There will also be short articles on materia non-medica that should add colour to the Journal.

The new SMJ marks important organisational developments but maintains the Journal's commitment to value scientific reports subjected to rigorous peer review; the new format advocates variety to avoid stodginess. For any scientific journal to grow in strength and prestige, change and continuity are not antithetical but complementary.

Kua Ee Heok, Editor
Goh Lee Gan, Deputy Editor

This Month in the SMJ

The January issue of the 1997 SMJ includes articles from a wide spectrum of medical disciplines. If you missed the SMA lecture in October 1996, then "Impact of a free market system on medicine in Singapore" (pg 7) is a "must read". Health economics is a raging topic in Singapore as well as the United States and Europe. The lecture focused on the Singapore perspective and future challenges.

There is a dearth of local data on the outcome of acute glaucoma and the study on "Clinical course and outcome of primary acute angle-closure glaucoma in Singapore" (pg 16) showed that the delay in treatment carried a significant risk of chronic glaucoma.

Group therapy is in vogue not just in psychiatry; there are currently groups for patients with stroke, cancer, epilepsy, etc. The paper on "Inpatient group psychotherapy in Chinese patients" (pg 19) explored the therapeutic factors in group dynamics.

Another local study on "Bone mineral density measurements" (pg 25) is vital to obtain a database for Singaporean women of different age groups. The authors also studied the lifestyle factors which might be associated with bone mineral density of 175 women aged 20-80.

The sign of AIDS can be protean and a case report discussed "CMV colitis masquerading as colon cancer - An unusual presentation of Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome" (pg 32).

In the section on Education, a column on "What you need to know" (pg 44) has the latest on the designer drug, Ecstasy.

Finally, the "Life and Times" of Dr Gwee Ah Leng (N3), the first editor of the SMJ and former Medical Director of SGH was a rare interview with a brilliant doctor of eclat and humility.