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Editorial Office Address

Editor
 Singapore Medical Journal
 Singapore Medical Association
 2 College Road
 Singapore 169850
 Fax: (65) 6224 7827
 Email: smj@sma.org.sg
 Website: www.sma.org.sg/smj

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Cover Picture:
 Hermann Boerhaave (1668-1738):
 18th Century Teacher Extraordinaire
 (Refer to page 3-5)

Charting The Course

W C G Peh

A journal can be likened to a ship, with the editor's role being analogous to that of the ship's captain. In his last editorial, outgoing "captain" C Rajasoorya has nicely summarised the inter-relationships of the owners, editorial team, reviewers and authors in a medical journal⁽¹⁾. To continue the nautical analogy, control of the bridge has recently been handed over, with the Singapore Medical Journal (SMJ) shipshape and cruising in fair waters. On behalf of authors, readers and stakeholders of SMJ, thank you Raja for your most capable captaincy over the last four years.

The readers of SMJ are like the passengers aboard a cruise liner. They will leave the vessel if it starts heading nowhere or towards treacherous waters, or if the ship's facilities and seaworthiness begin to decline. Fortunately, SMJ's course is firmly charted in the right direction and requires only periodic fine-tuning. In this regard, SMJ will be introducing two new columns to complement regular ones such as "Basic Statistics for Doctors", "Medicine in Stamps", and "Clinics in Diagnostic Imaging". These are "Pictorial Essay" and "Evidence-based Medicine", which will commence from the March and April issues, respectively.

Like the below-deck components of a ship, the inner workings of a journal are vital but are mostly hidden from view of the readers and the less experienced authors. The editorial team has started revamping and refining some of these below-deck activities, such as manuscript processing, and the reviewing, editing and publication processes. Electronic submission of manuscripts and electronic reviewing are now possible. We will also be accepting digital graphic files in lieu of camera-ready photographs. At this point of time, email submission of manuscripts will be confined to those without illustrations. Details of these and other changes can be found in the revised Instructions to Authors in this issue of SMJ and can also be downloaded from our journal website (www.sma.org.sg/smj). The Instructions to Authors will be updated periodically. Potential authors are advised to study this document carefully.


It is undoubtedly every author's wish to see his or her article made accessible to the widest international audience within the shortest possible time following manuscript acceptance. Over the next few months, the editorial team will aim to reduce the time required for acknowledgement of manuscripts, and the reviewing and editorial decision processes. I am pleased to announce that, from this issue onwards, all SMJ articles will be available online at least two weeks in advance of receipt by post of the printed journal. Singapore Medical Association (SMA) members will automatically receive an email notification when each new issue of

**Singapore Medical
 Journal**
 2 College Road
 Singapore 169850

W C G Peh, MD,
 FCRP, FRCR
 Editor

Correspondence to:
 Prof Wilfred CG Peh
 Tel: (65) 6327 5843
 Fax: (65) 6224 7827
 Email: smj.editor@
 sma.org.sg

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Your best manuscripts are the fuel that will propel the SMJ ship forward. Let's make our voyage together a fulfilling, interesting and enjoyable one. 

REFERENCE

1. Rajasoorya C. Snapshots of editing a medical journal (editorial). Singapore Med J 2003;44:610-3.

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Singapore Medical Association
Level 2, Alumni Medical Centre
2 College Road
Singapore 169850
Tel: (65) 6223 1264
Fax: (65) 6224 7827
URL <http://www.sma.org.sg>

Design and Advertising

Equity Communications Pte Ltd
145 Neil Road
Singapore 088874
Tel: (65) 6324 7822
Fax: (65) 6324 7833
Email: enquiries@equity.com.sg

For advertising matters,
call or email

- Charlie Teo at
Tel: (65) 6324 7822
Email: charlieteo@equity.com.sg

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