

FROM THE EDITORS

Preface

There are two ways in which the McMaster University Medical Journal stands out from other journals. The first is that MUMJ is clearly in an ever-evolving state, with sections being created and expanded on as many different themes and events which inspire our authors' interests. It also stands out for the vast expanse of medicine that it covers. Each year a new section is created in order to capture another field in the highly diverse, ever-expanding field of medicine.

This year, we are excited to feature three new sections. The first, Health Advocacy, reflects McMaster University's long tradition of promoting fair and equitable healthcare. In this issue the focus is on obesity. Bagovich illustrates the discrepancy in healthcare provision and utilization between obese and non-obese patients, and outlines issues that health providers should be aware of in order to ameliorate these differences. The second section is our most unique to date, entitled Literature, the Arts and Medicine. In this section we sought reflective pieces of art or literature by patients, students, physicians, nurses, and allied health professionals. These cover their personal experiences with illness, medical education, or the practice of medicine. This year we take a look at HIV/AIDS, particularly here in Hamilton. We hope you will find this section both informative and inspiring as the authors share their unique perspectives on dealing with illness. Finally, the Evidence-Based Medicine section outlines an approach to difficult clinical decision-making with a logical, evidence-based model (i.e. decision analysis) in order to improve patient outcomes.

In line with the theme of health advocacy, this year the International Health section focuses on Venezuela. VanderBurgh outlines how this country has chosen to address the gross discrepancies in healthcare between its poor and wealthy regions, through a 'doctor trade' with Cuba.

This issue also focuses on some of the more technical and methodological aspects of medicine. The aforementioned Evidence-Based Medicine section provides a model to aid in difficult clinical decision-making. The Public Health section explores an in-depth review of the statistical models available for analyzing health outcome data and why Bayesian models are becoming the mainstream methods in this area. Finally the Medical Technology section

features a new and unique design for a surgical trocar in laparoscopic abdominal surgery.

Of general clinical interest, this issue has a number of excellent features. We offer an expanded clinical review section that addresses atrial fibrillation, multiple sclerosis and use of the prostate specific antigen (PSA). From understanding atrial fibrillation in detail, to a historical review of the epidemiology of multiple sclerosis, to assessing the validity of a new PSA marker, our readers are sure to learn and appreciate these complex issues. There are also two case reports, both fascinating and informative. The Careers in Medicine section offers interesting insight into the true practice of plastic surgeons. In addition to this, Pallan created a Clinical Quiz, where readers can test their knowledge of Addison's disease, and perhaps pick up some valuable information! Finally, in this issue we examine the roots of the medical school at McMaster. Mueller outlines the history of the school with regards to its rapid growth and its innovative philosophy.

Two years ago, the former executive of MUMJ referred to the production as a "journal in germ". We feel that this issue is no exception, and we were honoured and excited to continue the tradition. Thank you to everyone who has worked so hard on this, the fifth issue of MUMJ. Your efforts are all greatly appreciated! We hope that you enjoy the eclectic collection of articles and we look forward to see how this 'germ' evolves and where it leads us next year!

Sincerely,

Anna Gunz (Editor-in-Chief)

Sarfaraz Banglawala (Executive Editor)

Susan VanderSpek (Executive Editor)