

Inaugural editorial

Anyone contemplating publishing a medical journal nowadays will have to address the following questions:

In this age of "information explosion", with more than 15 000 medical serials in print in 1994, is there room for another journal?

Will it survive in the present atmosphere of cost consciousness and financial constraints in the healthcare sector?

How will it compete with giants in the field—the *British Medical Journal*, the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, the *Lancet*, and the *New England Journal of Medicine*—all of which have had a long tradition of publication (with high impact factors), attract good quality articles, and can rely on a worldwide faithful readership?

Could a medical journal published in Hong Kong be different? From the geographical, social, political, and economic angles, few would disagree that Hong Kong is unique. While transcending many boundaries, medicine is peculiarly socially and culturally linked, and to a large extent the geographical and ethnic variations give life to its substance, like adding flesh to the skeleton. Hong Kong deserves a good medical journal of its own. In 1987, the government report on postgraduate medical education and training recommended that "one good 'Hong Kong Journal of Medicine' should be organised with whole-time editorial staff, and an advisory 'editorial board', and be supported by the agreement of the Academy of Medicine and Colleges, Medical Faculties, and preferably all the medical societies and associations in Hong Kong."¹

The Hong Kong Academy of Medicine and the

Hong Kong Medical Association have combined "to publish a general medical journal of high quality reflecting the current practice in the science and art of medicine and public health." Continuing the proud history of 46 years of the *Journal of the Hong Kong Medical Association* and its predecessors, this joint publication should provide a useful source of medical information on advances in medical research and clinical practice. With a readership (and potential authors) of over 5000 doctors and dentists, the Journal starts from a solid foundation. Witness the many articles of high standard contributed by local practitioners and scientists to acclaimed international journals. Is it asking too much to give more than a little to your own home journal? Do contribute your original research and clinical observations to the *Hong Kong Medical Journal*.

In addition to original articles and reviews, we are introducing a section on grand rounds or clinicopathological conferences. To facilitate communication with Chinese readers, there are selected summaries in Chinese. We will continue to listen to our readers and monitor our performance.

Hong Kong is one of the leaders in the rapidly developing Asia Pacific region where, alongside the booming economic growth of countries, medicine and health care are advancing by leaps and bounds, and medical information is keeping apace. To cater to the needs of this region, we intend taking on the challenge.²

The road ahead towards success is a long and hard one. However, with active support from members of the medical and dental professions, the future development and growth of the *Hong Kong Medical Journal* into a monthly medical journal of significance is assured.

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References

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2. Kale R. Health information for the developing world. *BMJ* 1994;309:939-42.