

Congratulations to the MJM

Dear MJM:

I am delighted to hear that McGill medical students are again publishing a journal devoted to and edited by the students themselves. When I was a medical student at McGill (from 1947 to 1951) there was a journal called the McGill Medical Journal, but in any typical class there seemed to be only a few students interested enough in research (to say nothing of doing any!) to write articles for it or even to read those that appeared. In my own class, only one or two other students did research in their spare time during the school year or in the summers. As far as I know, I am the only person in my class who actually ended up doing full-time research. In its clinical orientation, McGill was not very different from any other medical school on this continent: Harvard, where I now work, might have had three research-minded members in a typical class - three times as many, but still only 3%.

One day in my first year as a student I screwed up enough courage to approach one of our teachers - one of the two or three who actually did any research - to ask him about career opportunities (his name was Kenneth Evelyn; like me, he had taken honours in mathematics and physics as a McGill undergraduate). He wasn't exactly encouraging! He summed things up by saying that jobs in research were extremely scarce - but that, after all, statistics didn't matter too much if I ended up actually getting the one job that became available per year in Canada. Depressed, I returned to the gross anatomy lab where we spent every morning, Mondays through Saturdays, all that first year.

I needn't emphasize how much medicine has changed since then. I'm sure that any student with the slightest interest can find labs in which to spend summers or elective time to get a feel for research. I did my very first research in the U.S. Army, four years after graduation, and can't help feeling envious of students today who have two or three papers published by the time they graduate. Medical science has expanded explosively and opportunities to learn what research is like are available to anyone for the asking. The papers that will result from this will appear in this and future issues of the journal, and I look forward to reading them. The editors will, I hope, send me free issues, but, failing that, I will eagerly subscribe!

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