

EDITORIAL**EXPANDING THE FRONTIERS OF THE MJM**

I am pleased to present Volume 3, Number 2 of the *McGill Journal of Medicine (MJM)*, which continues the tradition of exceptional contributions to student research in the medical sciences. The ongoing work of the *Journal* has been recognized in a review in the November 5, 1997 issue of *JAMA* (Vol. 278(17):1471-1472; 1997), which states that the “*MJM* appears to be managed in a very professional manner and seems to be adhering to its initial goals. The original articles have maintained a high level of scientific merit and quality. The review articles have focused on topical discussion in a wide range of disease processes with some introduction of new pharmacologic agents.” (See Letters to the *MJM* in this issue for the full review).

This issue features contributions from diverse fields of scientific research. The first submission is from the National Institute of Health, in Washington D.C., and namely from the renowned Clinical Brain Disorder Branch. The authors discuss the distribution of 5-HT_{1A} receptors in the human dorsal vagal complex, suggesting a role for these receptors in the modulation of peripheral input and vagal output to the gastrointestinal and cardiorespiratory systems.

The next article examines the correlation between mental health and religiosity. This is an excellent paper in and of itself, but what makes this submission particularly distinctive is that the author is currently in her final year of high school in Tennessee, USA. The contribution of an article by an author in such an early stage of schooling is a first for the *MJM*. This article illustrates the uniqueness of the *MJM* in its dedication to student research; the promotion of student research in the *MJM* has always been based on the quality of the work, and not the level of the student. I would like to congratulate the author, Ms. Christina Glenn, on her precocious contribution to the medical research community.

The final original article for this issue of the *Journal* takes the *MJM* to Ghana, in West Africa, for a look at the impact of the construction of a dam on the Volta River on the prevalence of schistosomiasis in this region. This article provides a clear example of how developmental projects intended to improve the situation of a population can often also have secondary negative impacts which need to be corrected or prevented.

Our case report in this issue is a cautionary discussion on the risks of the complication of pseudomembranous colitis when antibiotics and chemotherapy are

combined in patient management.

This issue of the *Journal* also contains two excellent review articles. The first is a timely discussion on the use of methylphenidate (Ritalin) in the treatment of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, an issue which has received a great deal of attention in the media as of late. The second review discusses the treatment options available for patients with hearing loss due to acoustic neuroma and bilateral acoustic neurofibromatosis.

The *Crossroads* section considers the issue of human germline gene therapy, and with the recent furor over headless tadpoles and cloned sheep, provides an interesting discussion of the technological and moral difficulties facing this new frontier of scientific research.

While researching potential candidates for the conference section of this issue of the *Journal*, one of our editors was invited to travel to the 8th European Student Conference of the Charité, in Berlin, Germany. Copies of the *MJM* were presented to the authors of exceptional abstracts selected by the conference organizing committee and the *Journal* generated a great deal of interest and excitement among the international student population at the conference. Already, submissions have arrived from this conference and issue 4.1 looks to feature these international contributions as a result.

With the ever-increasing concerns of the health of the aging population, our *Focus* section features articles highlighting current research trends in Alzheimer's disease treatment and pathology. Contributions from three world renowned groups discuss such diverse subsections of research as the inflammatory hypothesis of the disease, genetic factors contributing to early onset familial Alzheimer's, and a review and case report considering current and envisioned treatment strategies for this debilitating disease.

Two groups in particular have come forward this year and deserve recognition and thanks for their support and commitment to the *Journal*. The Dean of Medicine at McGill, Dr. A. Fuks, continues his efforts to promote the *MJM* to the McGill community and beyond, and has offered many useful suggestions. The *Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association of Canada* has also given the *MJM* a strong vote of support from the pharmaceutical industry.

It has been a rewarding year as Editor-in-Chief of the *MJM* and I am proud of the strides the *Journal* has taken in such a short time since its creation. It is well on its way to achieving the dreams of its founders, and subsequent members, of becoming a vital part of student research around the globe. I would like to close with another quote from the review in *JAMA*, which

perhaps sums things up the best: "...*MJM*'s greatest accomplishments may be its introduction of novel ideas and interpretations of scientific research. It may help young, unknown scientists who are developing new approaches to disease processes to overcome some of the obstacles they frequently face. *MJM* may prove to be an important forum for those who will be the leaders in medical science during the 21st century."

I would like to thank everyone who has been involved with the *MJM* in the past year, especially the senior editorial staff. Your dedication and commitment to the *Journal* have made this a rich and rewarding experience. I wish the best of luck to next year's excellent editorial staff and I am sure that Volume 4 will continue to bring the *Journal* to new levels of achievement. As well, I would like to offer congratulations to our founding editor, Jonathan Lim, on the occasion of his marriage to Conyee Tsai, also a founding member of the *MJM*.

Jana Taylor, B.Sc.
Editor-in-Chief

Jana Taylor is the third Editor-in-Chief of the *McGill Journal of Medicine*. She received her B.Sc. in Biochemistry with First Class Honors from McGill University (Montreal, Quebec, Canada) in 1995 and is currently a third year medical student at the McGill University Faculty of Medicine. In the summers of 1994 and 1995, she worked for Health Canada evaluating clinical trials for the use of new medication in Canada.