

EDITORIAL**THE MJM AND THE STUDENT:
A FRUITFUL UNION**

On behalf of the student Editorial Board of the *McGill Journal of Medicine (MJM)*, it is my great honor to present the seventh issue of this remarkable tradition. The completely student-run *MJM* is indeed remarkable in many ways. Several qualities come immediately to mind, including the high standard of published papers, the original research features, and the international base of readers and authors.

I am certainly very proud of the obvious successes of the *MJM*, however, I would like to point out that one of our greatest successes may easily be overlooked. Tucked discretely beneath the gloss of our pages, the quality of our manuscripts, and the ever exciting challenge of our business operations, the real quality of the *MJM* is to be found with the students who work so very hard to produce each issue. What they give to the *Journal* is seen in its splendid final form; what they take from the *Journal* is less tangible, but perhaps will have a legacy which lives far beyond the pages of the *MJM*. Education, experience and opportunity are the hidden benefits of the *MJM*, and these are offered to every student who is brave enough to make a commitment. It is heartening to witness so many students quickly become confident first time authors or editors with unique experience.

Indeed, editors and authors alike gain so much from participating in the *MJM*. Each year, despite the large number of new students arriving, and experienced editors parting, the *MJM*'s success continues. To me, this confirms the powerful educational process at work, which is irresistibly driven by enthusiasm and pride. To be associated with any aspect of the publication of *MJM* is a remarkably enriching experience. All of our editors are gaining insight and maturity in medical and scientific writing, data interpretation, peer review and teamwork, as well as grappling with scientific, medical and fiscal problems. All of this is, of course, done above and beyond their own studies.

The educational experience of the *MJM* does not end with McGill editors. For instance, over the last year, I am happy to report that a network of external student referees has been developed and many students from beyond McGill have come aboard and participated as peer reviewers for submitted papers. Moreover, and very significantly, many student authors from around Canada and the world have benefited from the rigorous,

yet absolutely constructive, peer review system. Like no other, *MJM* peer review (carried out at both the student and Faculty level) is tailored towards student growth and experience; all manuscripts submitted receive constructive criticism and authors are helped at every stage of the writing experience. Ultimately, it is the reader who benefits from the rigorous manuscript development, and is presented with well written, highly readable papers that lend themselves to the learning environment.

I firmly believe that the *MJM* is an extremely valuable asset to the education of all students who have the good fortune to become involved, whether from McGill or elsewhere; in truth, students can be each other's best teachers, and here students cannot help but learn from one another. With the effort and enthusiasm of the students involved, the steadfast support of our Faculty Advisor, Dr. Phil Gold, and the encouragement of the Faculty of Medicine, the *MJM* will continue in its grassroots tradition that has proven to be so successful. In an address to students, this Faculty's most venerable graduate, Sir William Osler, advised that "to an absorbing passion, a whole-souled devotion, must be joined an enduring energy" (1). I feel that the *MJM* has taken Sir William's counsel to heart, and it is that which is the key to our success.

The current issue of the *MJM* features a wide range of topics in the medical sciences, and exemplifies what students can do when the right goals are set. The original articles make very real contributions to the medical sciences. Notably, Mr. Beffert's paper concerning herpes simplex virus, apolipoprotein E and Alzheimer's Disease, provides a detailed analysis of the relationship between these factors, and demonstrates that the presence of herpes simplex virus in any of the brain regions studied does not increase the risk for Alzheimer's Disease. The other original articles concern the *HER2/neu* oncogene and a community mental health facility, and make informative contributions to their respective fields. These articles are complemented by other excellent student-authored contributions, including enlightening discussions of juvenile nasopharyngeal angiofibroma, matrix metalloproteinases and glioma, as well as the prevention of mother-to-infant transmission of HIV by AZT. The featured *Student Research Symposium* represents the *MJM*'s continuing commitment to international research, and highlights award winning abstracts from the *National Student Research Forum*, held in Galveston, Texas, USA. Our last student contribution in this issue is found in the *Crossroads* section, and concerns the difficult and ethically charged issue of rationing health care in times of limited resources. Sure to be controversial, the author should be

applauded for facing such an uncomfortable issue in such a frank and forthright manner. Indeed, acceptable solutions will only come following wide and open discourse.

The *MJM Focus* for this issue is a timely and extremely informative trio of papers by world renowned physicians and scientists concerning the growing problem of antibiotic resistant bacterial pathogens. Dr. van Veen and colleagues introduce us to the molecular functioning by which many bacteria are resistant to antibiotics, namely, multidrug transporters. Next, Drs. Kellner and Low present clinical trends concerning infections caused by an important pathogen *Streptococcus pneumoniae*, which is increasingly developing resistance to penicillin. Finally, Dr. Robson puts the seriousness of the problem into perspective with his report of a fatal incidence of penicillin resistant *Streptococcus Pneumoniae* pneumonia.

The *MJM* is a forum that permits students to make real contributions to the world of scholarly medicine, to contribute to the education of their peers — editors, authors and readers alike — to learn so much from their experience, and is a valuable thing indeed. On behalf of the entire Editorial Board, I sincerely hope you enjoy this latest issue of the *MJM*.

Daniel S. Auld
Editor-in-Chief

1. Osler W. The student life: a farewell address to Canadian and American medical students. *Canada Lancet* 39: 121-138; 1905-1906.

Daniel S. Auld is the fourth Editor-in-Chief of the *McGill Journal of Medicine* and has served as an editor since 1996. He received his B.A. degree *With Merit* from York University (Toronto, Ontario, Canada) in 1994, where he studied psychology. He is currently working towards his Ph.D. degree in Neurological Sciences from the Department of Neurology and Neurosurgery, McGill University (Montreal, Quebec, Canada). His thesis work concerns the neurotransmitter related functioning of different neuronal phenotypes following exposure to Alzheimer's disease associated insults. He has held a Doctoral Studentship from the Alzheimer Society of Canada and currently holds a Doctoral Award from the Medical Research Council of Canada.