

Disasters can strike at any place, any time, to anybody. If a disaster happened now, would you be ready? The recent Christchurch earthquake reminds us that due to its location and environment, New Zealand faces many potential disasters. The devastating physical impact a disaster can have is easily seen, but what about the economic and social consequences? The Christchurch earthquake prompted Sultan Al-Shaqsi to write about the impact of global disasters. Our thoughts go to those in Christchurch, recovering from the earthquake and involved with rebuilding the city.

Our special feature this issue examines medical student selection policies. The policies and 'controversy' surrounding medical student selection is a pertinent issue for students already in the medical programme. Certainly the topic of selection tools and the over representation of particular ethnic groups has been bandied by sensationalist New Zealand media, (cf North & South magazine's September issue: 'The disappearing white male doctor'). However, the topic is not simply black and white. Selection tools have to serve multiple purposes that ultimately 'result in specialists prepared to work in areas of greatest health need in the future'. It has also been noted that 'changing models of care will see greater emphasis on the role of the general practitioner and the generalist'. What are the implications for the future medical workforce? What will the future medical workforce (of which we will all be part of) look like?

In this issue we reprint a New Zealand Medical Journal article by Poole et al. (2009), which looks at medical student selection policies in New Zealand and their implications for the future. The rationale for certain selection tools is discussed, as well as the current New Zealand situation. We have also sought additional commentary from Dr John Adams and Professor Peter Crampton, the Deans of the Dunedin and Wellington Schools of Medicine respectively. Special thanks to them both and to the NZMA for permitting us to reprint the article in its entirety.

Learning opportunities are aplenty for medical students. We highlight some of the ways in which students can further enrich their learning outside of medical school, whether it be attending a conference or volunteering off the beaten track. Felicity Williamson writes about her experience volunteering for the One-2-One Charitable Trust. Her trip to Cambodia was an eye-opening experience and there are opportunities for students to be involved with similar trips in the future.

We also continue our series of articles on the BMedSc(Hons) programme, with some additional hints on how to make the most of the programme!

The Journal is proud of our work in publishing the writing of medical students. Issue 11 of the NZMSJ was awarded the Best New Student Initiative by the New Zealand Medical Student Association. This award was given in recognition of the excellent contributions the NZMSJ has made in furthering and promoting medical student research. We would like to thank all the contributors for this issue.

We hope that you find the twelfth issue of the Journal informative, and invite you to submit your views and opinions for publication in our next issue.

The NZMSJ Executive

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