

2006 represents an exciting time for the NZMSJ, with an establishment of a branch of the executive committee at the School of Medicine at the University of Auckland. Associated with this expansion, we are delighted to announce that this issue's NZMSJ Writing Prize is provided by the University of Auckland's Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, Professor Iain Martin. The winner of this prize was an excellent piece written by an Auckland trainee intern, Matt Wheeler. His article titled "Is Death the Death of the Whole Brain?" can be found on page 7.

The amalgamation with the University of Auckland has also resulted in an improvement to the NZMSJ's peer review system by increasing the number of high quality reviewers it uses to assess submissions. All articles accepted by the NZMSJ go through peer-review by an expert in the relevant field. This process has now been expanded to include feature articles. We would like to take the time to thank the academic staff members of all four New Zealand's schools of medicine who have volunteered to make a contribution to medical education. The recent high profile Hwang fraud case, involving stem cell research, has created some misconceptions about the value of the peer review system. Peer review relies on trust and is not designed to detect false reports. It is invaluable however to use experts in the field to evaluate the robustness and credibility of submitted works. Publication of research, including that undertaken by students in this journal, allows current medical practice to be continually challenged and improved. This process provides the evidence base that differentiates modern medicine from mere witchcraft and wizardry.

The NZMSJ provides another important role in medical education. As the only peer-reviewed medical student journal in Australasia and the South Pacific, we not only encourage publication of quality academic work by students but we also facilitate public debate of issues that affect students, by students. Premjit Gill's opinion article in our last issue regarding the Advanced Choice of Employment scheme stimulated some interesting feedback (see pages 5 and 6). Similarly, Brad Stone's opinion piece in this issue regarding our current medical education "Where to from here for Medical Schools" (pages 24-26) opens another forum for informed debate. Response in the form of letters to the editor, or further opinion pieces are welcome.

We look forward to continuing our roles, with an expanded executive, from issue 5 and beyond.

The NZMSJ Executive

The NZMSJ editorial board maintains that the articles published under the heading "opinion" are the personal views of the author and the NZMSJ does not support or endorse these views in any way but respects the author's rights to voice his/her opinions.

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