

Welcome to the sixth issue of the New Zealand Medical Student Journal (NZMSJ). The NZMSJ is one of the few student-based journals accepting original research articles with expert review for publication and to date we have received medical student submissions from Australia, the USA, the UK, Mexico, Brazil and Nepal. Although we are focussed on the education of New Zealand students, international submissions (and readership) are testament to the journal's growing success.

We are now in our fifth year of publication and are immensely proud that the journal has firmly established itself as a valuable means through which academic writing skills can be polished and professional development in the area of medical research enhanced amongst the New Zealand medical student community. This is demonstrated by this issue's inclusion of the first of a series of short critical review articles prepared by second year students from the Auckland School of Medicine, an initiative which we hope will give these students an introduction to the process involved in submitting an article to a peer-reviewed journal and equip them with confidence in academic writing which they can take with them in their future clinical careers. We also feature a conference report from one of our editorial team, Victoria Taylor on her attendance at Digestive Disease Week in Washington D.C. in May of this year, in which she outlines how a summer studentship in Barrett's oesophagus lead to the opportunity to travel and presentation of her findings at an international conference, exemplifying how undertaking research as a student can benefit one's future career as a clinician.

This issue also continues in our tradition of showcasing the proactive attitude characteristic of New Zealand medical students and their many and varied initiatives to address weighty current national and international health issues. The inaugural Clinician's Medical Education Convention of Aotearoa (MECA) was successfully convened last year and provided an opportunity for medical students from throughout Australasia to meet with current clinicians and inform themselves of many of the pressing issues facing our future health workforce. See page 11 for 2006 MECA Convener Jared Kilday's conference report. The 17th Global Congress of International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW) was also held last year and its efforts in addressing an important global health issue are presented in Rosemary Wyber's page 20 report.

The NZMSJ executive is delighted to be in a position to nurture and promote these worthy student initiatives.

The NZMSJ executive extend our sincere gratitude to the Rt. Hon. Pete Hodgson for his generous grant in aid of our publication in December last year. We also express our thanks to Professor Peter Joyce, Dean of the Christchurch School of Medicine, for his generous sponsorship of this issue's Dean's Writing Prize. Brent Hyslop, a fifth year medical student at the Wellington School of Medicine was the recipient of this prize for his piece on prolongation of the QT interval during methadone use. Finally, we wish to thank all of our expert reviewers from each of the four schools of medicine throughout New Zealand, whose contribution to the journal allows us to provide our authors with a rigorous and informative peer review process and to our two academic advisors, Dr John Allison and Associate Professor David Perez for their continued contribution.

We congratulate all our contributors on their initiative and efforts and hope you feel deservedly proud on seeing your work in print. We look forward to receiving future quality submissions from our readers both in New Zealand and abroad.

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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