

EDITORIAL

In accepting the invitation to write this editorial, I was engulfed by a feeling of excitement not unlike that experienced by the delightful adolescent in the movie *Back to the Future*. It has given me an opportunity to look back at psychiatry in Hong Kong in the beginning of this century while maintaining my memory and understanding of the present. In so doing, I may gain some insight into the future.

Like many important achievements in history, psychiatry in Hong Kong had a humble beginning. At the turn of the century a small wing of the Government Central Hospital in Sai Ying Poon was allocated to the care of the mentally ill. Over a span of 17 years only 30 patients were admitted. The reasons for such a low admission rate are now lost in the mist of history.

In the subsequent decades psychiatry remained in the backwaters and psychiatrists practised essentially as alienist.

The period of accelerated growth started in the 1970s. The last 2 decades were characterized by a rapid increase in the number of inpatient beds, outpatient and daypatient facilities and the proliferation of community services. The number of qualified psychiatrists, psychiatric nurses and mental health workers also multiplied. Two academic departments of psychiatry were also established. All these developments have provided for an improvement in both the quantity and quality of care.

In 1990 with the founding of the Hong Kong Academy of Medicine, psychiatry was accorded the status of a Foundation College. With this act of recognition, psychiatry has finally come of age in Hong Kong.

Despite the fact that the College is still in its infancy, it is buttressed by a strong membership. The senior members who had laboured in the wilderness shall guide the College with their wisdom and strength of resolve forged by their years of struggling for psychiatry's place in the sun. There are the second generation psychiatrists who will strive to ensure that the College will continue to develop. Finally there are the young psychiatrists who impress us with their vigour and dedication. The membership is also a rainbow coalition of psychiatrists in private practice, in public service and the academia. With such a membership, the College possesses all the ingredients for success.

This is the first volume of the Journal of the Hong Kong College of Psychiatrists. The editing of this Journal is now in the hands of young and enthusiastic psychiatrists who carry with them the imprimatur to nurture the flagship of the College into the next century. We can all demonstrate our support by actively contributing to the Journal.

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