

EDITORIAL

The Hong Kong Journal of Psychiatry, just like the Hong Kong College of Psychiatrists, has now entered its seventh year. This seventh year is often called a 'sabbatical year' and signified a period of rest and recuperation. Therefore, it is a right time that the Chief Editor and its Editorial Board members should reconsider the structure of the Board and the future direction of the Journal.

In a very recent editorial of the British Medical Journal (Saturday, 4 January, 1997), there is a topic "Does the world need the BMJ?", and indeed many medical journals are beginning to disappear from the world scene. There is often complaint of the overflowing of medical information, and that published material are late in arrival compared with the electronic medical bulletins, including the Internet. Indeed many people are complaining of problems of space and storage for the many medical journals that they are receiving, not to mention that some of the first issues are starting to decay and smell.

Fortunately, this Journal still have some merits to continue its publication, let alone its fine 'quality' of the paper and its colourful format. As stated before, the Journal aims to be the bridge between Eastern and Western psychiatry. Throughout the past years, there are indeed contribution from different countries of Asia, and we have been instrumental in encouraging psychiatrists in China to report via this Journal their findings in English to other parts of the world. Now that with the return of sovereignty of Hong Kong to the People's Republic of China, the role of liaison between the West and the East becomes more inevitable and obvious. Of course, more can be done in this area and hopefully, the Journal can soon establish a communication network with Chinese psychiatrists in different parts of the world.

Furthermore, the Journal can also introduce to others what our colleagues in Hong Kong are doing. With the development of scientific symposia of the Hong Kong College there are some presentations of quality that are worthy of publishing; and since our Journal has been accepted by the Excerpta Medica database from 1997 onwards, the compilations of such papers would be beneficial to all parties concerned.

On the other hand, the Journal does need some changes to make itself more attractive to contributors and the readers. Firstly, in order to hasten the publication of more issues, the Editorial Board is tentatively divided into two streams, each looking after the publication of one issue. Secondly, there is streamlining of the editorial process from reception of contributions to review to editing. If such division of labour works as expected, then at least three issues will come out this year. The Editorial Board has also targeted that there would be no delay in responding to a paper with a verdict within three months, and that such accepted submissions would be published within a year.

Secondly, the Journal will definitely go electronic, with more use of its Internet homepage and the e-mail address. Hopefully, future ordering of the Journal and even submission of papers etc. may be done in an instant, not only for abstract and correspondence.

All the above endeavours are meaningless without the feedback from our advisors and readers, or the submissions of papers from fellow mental health professionals. I would, therefore, appeal to you for your continuous support to this unique Journal, and suggestions are most welcome.

Lastly, as the Chief Editor, I would like to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to all my colleagues (including the new blood) in the Editorial Board, for their dedication in the edition, desktop publishing, journal printing and delivery, liaison, finance control etc. etc. etc...

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