

Preface from the Editors

Welcome to the 2011-2012 edition of the *University of Toronto Medical Journal (UTMJ)*! We have the distinction of being Canada's oldest student-run publication, and this year marks the 89th year of the *UTMJ*. In the first issue of this year, we bring you a wide range of articles on topics relating to health and medicine. These pieces span from basic experimental studies to short stories and poetry, which illustrate the diversity of experience and emotion involved in medical training.

It is both an honor and privilege to continue the *UTMJ* tradition that encourages and supports students in their efforts to venture into the field of scholarly research and publishing. Before we begin our journey we must thank last year's editors-in-chief, Margaret Olszewski and Eric Siu, for their contributions to the Journal. This year, we hope to build on the initiatives that were implemented in previous years while widening the scope and reach of the *UTMJ*.

Public health is a multidimensional concept that reflects the complex interactions between various biological and socioeconomic factors on the quality of life. The exact contribution of any one discipline to improvements in public health is difficult to ascertain, and medicine is no exception to that. However, what is clear is that milestones, such as the development of the smallpox vaccine and the discovery of insulin, have significantly advanced the health of the public. Furthermore, in the face of an aging population and an increasing incidence of chronic disease, medicine retains the ability to positively and meaningfully influence public health in the future. Medicine crosses into the realm of public health whenever it supports prevention, screening and early diagnosis of a disease. Thus, continued research into each of these areas is essential if we are to achieve the full potential of medicine's contribution to public health. It is our hope that the articles presented in this issue are one small step in this direction.

In our first Imaging Case Report article, *Spano and Bleakney* present a case that highlights the important clinical signs and symptoms of neurofibromatosis in addition to the common musculoskeletal changes associated with this disease. The authors go on to discuss the common findings on imaging studies that support the diagnosis and evaluation of neurofibromatosis.

The following Quick Diagnosis by *Mansouri and Tierney* address an approach to diagnosing a case of septated arachnoid cysts with arachnoiditis. Through this discussion on pathophysiology, differential diagnoses and treatment options, the authors underscore the importance of a systematic approach in diagnosing disease.

In the Reviews section, *Matlow* summarizes guidelines and strategies available to Canadian health care professionals to screen for potential cases of fetal alcohol spectrum disorders. Given the importance of early diagnosis in the management of this condition, it is fitting that we develop familiarity with these resources early in our training. The subsequent article by *Ogunyemi* reviews relevant literature dealing with hypertension as an independent risk factor for primary open-angle glaucoma. Currently, it is not clear how ethnicity influences

the risk of glaucoma. Here, the author attempts to tease out the possible correlation that exists between primary open-angle glaucoma and African ancestry.

In the Research section, *Thakur, Zaman, Fitzpatrick, Hummel and Jones* describe an exciting study demonstrating that a single dose of retroviral vector is sufficient to induce a population of human cells to express immunomodulatory proteins that are capable of suppressing the acute cellular alloimmune response. This observation provides valuable insight into extending the viability of allogeneic transplants. In addition, *Verma, Dhaliwal and Walton* review evidence on the prevention and treatment of post-herpetic neuralgia in the context of a clinical case of varicella zoster virus reactivation in the form of shingles. The authors explore various treatment modalities including anti-virals, corticosteroids, opioids, lidocaine, anti-depressants, anti-convulsants, capsaicin, and vaccines and their various roles in a systematic treatment approach.

Through our Global Health section, *Ebrahim* explores the eye-opening impact of HIV/AIDS in Kenyan society through a local non-government agency, Kenya AIDS Intervention Prevention Project Group (KAIPPG). In this article, *Ebrahim* shares personal experiences in various villages of Kenya exposing marginalization and stigma in the context of HIV and AIDS.

In the History of Medicine, *Khan and Noor* follow the exciting history of *The Canon of Medicine* by physician and philosopher Avicenna in European medical education, discussing this work's monumental impact on medical teaching.

Our short story on *Culture Competency in Health Care* by *Xu* reflects on the dynamic challenges associated with the barriers of language, culture, beliefs and values in delivering health care. Through the sharing of his personal experience, *Xu* helps medical students reflect on the challenges of cultural diversity at all stages of medical practice.

Lastly, in an ongoing *UTMJ* tradition, we have chosen to republish an exciting article from 1955 by *Schatz* on the challenges and profound implications of the poliomyelitis vaccine. Through this article, we can appreciate the impressive advancements in vaccine technology and its impact on addressing issues of global and public health.

Through our first issue on public health, we hope to educate and inspire medical students and medical professionals alike. In light of the outstanding advancements and achievements made, we hope this issue motivates students to pursue personal endeavours in public health.

We would also like to take this opportunity to thank the countless number of individuals who make every issue of the *UTMJ* possible, from authors to editors to subscribers and patrons. We look forward to working with such an outstanding group of individuals this year. We hope that you enjoy reading this issue of the *UTMJ*.

Sincerely,

Bailey Dyck and Sheron Perera
Editors-in-Chief