

## Retooling for Changing Circumstances

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The Annals, as many of you will already have noted, looked different in the first quarter of the year. Starting with the July 2001 issue, the Annals will introduce a new format of articles to reflect its changed outlook. In a modification aimed at decreasing the turnaround time of publication, the Board will free up more space for original articles (free papers). Only six to eight articles per issue will cluster around a given theme or discipline. This measure means that potential authors will have to wait a shorter time before receiving the report incorporating the expert reviewers' comments. Needless to say, we encourage our panel of expert reviewers, physicians and scientists no less busy than yourselves, to continue to cooperate in reducing the total response time.

The Editorial Board, after due diligent consideration, will dissolve the former 'hanging committee', which made final decisions about submitted articles after the return of independent reviews. Executive editorial decisions will be accelerated so as not to deter aspiring authors, many of whom understandably wish to know soonest the outcome of their submissions.

The Annals will shortly introduce a series of articles to promote continuing professional development. At first these will be paper based, but we intend to convert the system of self-education into a Web-based one, which will ultimately permit direct entry of CME points to the Singapore Medical Council.

Finally, we will have recourse to an International Advisory Panel, comprising eminent academics and expert health professionals with considerable experience in the editing of biomedical papers. These advisers will help the Board to develop into a more creditable journal, as readers, authors, and editors move into a different relationship, which we all wish to be a more fruitful and mutually supportive enterprise. For this purpose, the Board appeals to all readers of the Annals to submit high quality papers for publication. If a younger physician only considers submitting good papers to high impact journals overseas, then no home-grown journal can possibly become a high impact journal. The international community of physicians judges Singapore's physicians not just by the country's public health, but also by the vigour and rigour of our biomedical journals.

After all, the entire purpose of professional publication is to disseminate knowledge in the specialties of medicine which is insightful, accurate, and helpful to our local community of doctors. If together we can also make that knowledge inspiring, respect-worthy, and good fun to read, then we will achieve something worthwhile.

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