

A Change in Editor

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“All exact science is dominated by the idea of approximation.”

Bertrand Russell

The first issue of the *Annals* (designated New Series) was published in the first quarter of 1972. The first editor of the *Annals* was Dr Chew Chin Hin (1972 to 1973). Dr NC Tan was the second editor from 1974 until 1989. The third editor was Dr ST Lee, who stepped down in mid-1999. In the same year, I became the editor of the *Annals*, having previously joined the *Annals* Editorial Board in 1990, first as a Board member and subsequently as Treasurer.

Having served the *Annals* over the last 15 years in varying capacities as Board Member, Treasurer, and approximately these last 5 years as Editor, it is quite difficult to say goodbye to the *Annals*. The previous editors had already made major contributions to the reputation of the *Annals* which is the premier medical journal for the specialist doctors in Singapore.

The *Annals* went through a major revamp in 2001. Two panels were set up to advise and assist the Editorial Board, i.e. 1) International Advisory Panel, wherein internationally reknowned academicians and editors were invited to join the *Annals* as advisors and 2) a Specialist Advisory Panel was formed to help with reviews on specialty articles submitted to the *Annals*. Free paper issues which were produced in between specialty issues were phased out and replaced by Theme issues. The Theme issues carry 8 to 10 papers on a particular topic of current interest and also include about 10 to 12 free papers in the same issue. In this way, current topical issues are dealt with and the backlog of free papers submitted to the *Annals* is also reduced. A new section on Continuing Professional Development or CPD was created with short reviews from various specialists and a set of multiple choice questions (MCQ) enclosed for self-assessment. In 2001, there was also a complete change in the design of the cover of the *Annals*, which made it attractive at a glance, and one also had a listing of articles available on the front cover.

Since January 2002, the *Annals* has been indexed in the Science Citation Index - Expanded, ISI Alerting Services, and Current Contents/Clinical Medicine. The *Annals* was first listed in the Index Medicus in 1979 as a result of tireless efforts by Dr NC Tan. The journal will receive its impact factor in mid-2004 after being monitored for the last 2 years. The Editorial Board has been working towards making all full text articles available online. This is in keeping with the Editorial Board's decision to get the journal completely electronic in 2004. Negotiations are ongoing with Linkout which will arrange for the *Annals* to be connected to Linkout. Linkout is a feature of Entrez from PubMed which enables users from anywhere in the world logging on to PubMed to be linked to the full text articles on *Annals* website. This will increase exposure for the *Annals* worldwide, compared to the current situation of having only the abstracts online. The Editor and Deputy Editor of the *Annals* are also members of EASE (European Association of Science Editors) and WAME (World Association of Medical Editors).

As Editor and Chairman of the *Annals*, I am grateful for the support and cooperation from the members of the Editorial Board. My deep appreciation also goes to the Senior Editorial Assistant, Ms Yong Bee Choon, and the Editorial Assistant, Ms Sheila Ng, both of whom have taken a lot of routine matters away from the increasing responsibilities that I have had as Editor. I wish *Annals* a bright future and I am confident that the new Editor, Professor Vernon Oh, will take *Annals* to even greater heights with full support from the members of the Editorial Board and the Editorial Assistants.

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