EDITORIAL

To the future: a new direction for Public Health Action

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Public Health Action (PHA) has just completed its third year of publication. It has progressed over this period, and has retained its focus on the priorities that we established for it at the outset. It has attracted a very nice corpus of material focusing on the challenges facing health services and health systems. Many said (or if they didn't say it, they thought it) that our choice of focus was not really 'science' in the true sense of the word, and we have proven them wrong. Moreover, coming from a rather narrow focus (as many of us have with a disease-specific approach), we have attracted a wide variety of material with interesting and important topics. This is no mean achievement.

The focus of PHA is an area that has received very little attention, despite the fact that high quality health services and health systems are vital to achieving the best outcomes possible for those seeking care. The scientific work presented in PHA over these three years has shown very clearly the wide range of challenges we face in providing the type of care we hope to give (and often thought, erroneously, that we were giving). Creating the new knowledge concerning these challenges and making it available to a wide audience is the first step toward addressing them and toward improving the systems and services with which we work. But it is only the first step. We have seen

ideas come forth to challenge us to take responsibility to ensure that action follows words and that this action itself is critically evaluated to ensure that it accomplishes what we think it is meant to do. This we have not yet achieved, and it must be a high priority for the future, both in the work we do and in the articles we present in this *Journal*.

Over the three years of its operations, PHA has managed submitted articles within a very tight time frame with rapid review, and for this we must recognize the work of the many who managed the submissions in a timely manner, undertook the reviews very efficiently and edited the final copy to produce the material that has been publicly presented. Finally, we have managed to produce, and so far sustain, a *Journal* that is financially stable and not dependent on grants and gifts. And this has been achieved without shifting the priority away from those in greatest need in our world. PHA is unusual in having its primary focus on health solutions for the poor, and it has a fine record of achievement in presenting scientific work primarily from low-income countries.

Clearly it is now time for PHA to take on a fresh approach, and a transition to a new Editor-in-Chief is timely. I wish the new person, and all of you together who have committed so much to the *Journal*, all the very best for the future.

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NOTE FROM THE CHAIR OF THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE

It is with characteristic modesty that Don Enarson has written his last editorial as Editor-in-Chief of Public Health Action. PHA is a fitting addition to the impressive Enarson legacy to the world of public health, which was recognised through the awarding of The Union Medal, The Union's most prestigious award, to Don in 2013. On behalf of The Union, I would like to wish him all the best for the next phase of his life, and thank him for the vision and dedication that he brought to his work and all his collaborations.

We were honoured with applications from many high quality candidates in our search for a new Editor-in-Chief. The identity of the new EIC will be announced shortly on the PHA website.

Professor S B Squire, MD
Chair, Nominating Committee
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