Walking into Sunset

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It has been a pleasure and privilege to serve as Editor-in-Chief of Medical Journal Armed Forces India or (MJAFI). When I was appointed, the journal had already been well launched on its path to success by my many able predecessors. During my years I have worked with several distinguished members of the Governing Council and I acknowledge their guidance with gratitude. My heaviest debt of gratitude is to the superb team of editors. Their prompt thoughtful and constructive evaluation of articles has enabled our contributors to hone their articles to greater level of excellence, making MJAFI a journal in which we can justifiably take pride. Since the inception of the journal, various editorial teams have made a commitment to incorporate and reflect the changing world of medicine through this publication which caters to a large and diverse readership both at the institutional and individual level. These changes were reflected by way of introduction of guest columns, ABC of emergency management, updates and review articles in addition to the original articles and case reports; a true hallmark of a multi-speciality journal. The uniqueness of the journal was recognized and it is indexed with IndMED, ExtraMED, Index Medicus for South East Asia, Internal Abstracts of Biological Sciences (UK), Abstracts of World Medicine (UK), Hygiene and Tropical Diseases Abstracts (UK) and EMBASE. The editorial teams remained receptive to the knowledge needs of its readership and with changing times looked beyond the conventional frontiers to include articles more relevant to the military environment. The seamless transition to its new existence now seems to be on the roll.

Successive editors have energized their place of work and introduced an infectious enthusiasm in the editorial board, its authors and many referees and reviewers, as evidenced by the overwhelming feedback and comments we get from our readers after each issue is published, many encouraging, but some critical. The editorial teams have tried to maintain a balance between the many authors and the 'hawks and doves' amongst the referees. The journal has blown hot and cold with many of its

contributors. The authors of best articles and best referees were given due recognition but the increasing practice of "Gift Authorship" was frowned upon and discouraged [1]. But who would watch the editors? The editors chose to police themselves and kept their functioning transparent, overboard and in confirmation to the code of ethics as outlined by the "International Committee of Medical Journal Editors".

The influence of information technology on medical sciences has further pushed the limits of its potential use and future expansion. The journal took advantage of this revolution and introduced the concept of 'e' correspondence with its authors and referees. It has been able to reduce the lead time from receipt of an article to its acceptance to less than six months. Further, it is now hosted on the web at website <http://indmed.nic.in>. A long felt need was of having rapid and easy access to all our past issues. Digital archiving of all past issues is being rapidly implemented and we hope it will make it easy for our many readers to cross reference articles.

With the acceptance of an International panel of advisors by the Governing Council, the journal now aims to expand beyond the Indian perspective and give a balanced view of military medicine from an International view point. Although names and appearances are important, they should not detract or distract from our journals primary role of informing its readership of advancement in clinical and basic sciences and more importantly in issues related to military medicine. The basic structure of our journal remained unchanged but articles related to military health were encouraged, as evident in this issue. Journals invariably reflect research, rather than lead it. However we felt that it would be of considerable interest to military health care providers if there was more writing on environment related diseases, casualty triage, documentation and so on.

Even with changing times, our commitment to maintaining the high standards and editors code of ethics remained unchanged and in many ways the Governing Council members and referees had far more influence

than the editorial team in maintaining standards and ensuring we follow a constant course. On handing over the post, I would like to emphasize the significant contribution made by our many authors and referees to the stability and standards of our journal, and to give my personal thanks for their effort and help. I shall miss working with them and also reading the articles submitted to the journal which has been a constant

source of intellectual opportunity to get acquainted with the many scholars. As I disappear into the sunset, I quote a wonderful poem "As you set out for Ithaca" by CP Cavafy: "Hope your road is a long one, full of adventure, full of discovery....." It was.

Reference

1. Wagena EJ. The scandal of unfair behaviour of senior faculty. J Med Ethics 2005; 31: 308.

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