

The beginning of a new journey

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I take over the chief editorship of the *Singapore Medical Journal (SMJ)* in 2014 with much anticipation and a strong sense of responsibility. Professor Teo Eng Kiong had been preparing me for this role since June last year, enabling the 'handover of the baton' to occur seamlessly. For this, and for his immense contribution to the *Journal*, I am grateful to Prof Teo. An appropriate Chinese idiom that describes what we all need to do every now and then is “饮水思源” (yǐn shuǐ sī yuán), which literally means “when drinking, one should think of the water source”.

Prof Teo has been instrumental in bringing many important changes to the *Journal* during his four-year tenure as Editor-in-chief. He spearheaded a revamp in the *Journal's* cover design and page layout, and introduced new article types, including the summary of the Ministry of Health's Clinical Practice Guidelines. He also appointed specialty editors and assigned new roles to the editorial board members, which helped to significantly improve the processing time of submitted manuscripts. For the first time, the *Journal* acquired an impact factor, which was awarded in 2011. Also for the first time, the *Journal* introduced an article processing charge in 2013, as part of a viable economic model to support the administration of peer-review. It is clear that under Prof Teo's leadership, the editorial board has expanded, and the *Journal* has become leaner and more impactful, yet maintaining its unique flavour. Prof Teo has also demonstrated highly effective leadership, an efficient working style and generosity to his staff. Although I had hopes that he would remain as Editor-in-chief for many

more terms, I am immensely gratified that he has accepted my invitation to serve as an advisor to help chart the *Journal's* future.

I am also grateful to the specialty editors who are staying on to assist in making important decisions for the *Journal*, as well as the many reviewers who have spent many hours critiquing papers and improving the quality of the *Journal*. Ultimately, the *Journal* depends on good submissions from authors around the world – local, regional and international. We are also very fortunate to have a hardworking editorial team that handles all the processing of articles, and spots major and minor issues that surface intermittently.

Together, we seek to increase the impact factor of the *Journal* while bearing in mind the overarching objective of serving our readers. In addition to reducing the processing time of submitted manuscripts, we hope to further reduce the time from first submission to eventual publication. Rapid decisions can be made to accept or reject some papers in order to improve turnaround time. While we will still publish continuous medical education (CME) articles, we hope to have more reviews and mini reviews incorporating CME, which will serve the dual purpose of education and citation. Although many new journals, including open-accessed ones, have sprouted in recent years, I believe *SMJ* will continue to surge ahead and stay on top, owing to a strong history behind us.

I look forward with excitement to working with all of you in the next few years to make *SMJ* the general medical journal of choice in the region.