A Grain of Sand in the Ocean: Training New Generations of Editors, Reviewers, and Medical Scientists

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Since its conception, the *International Journal of Medical Students* (*IJMS*) has aimed to train the next generation of medical scientists and medical editors. ^{1,2} Besides being the main platform of scientific publications for medical students and recently graduated physicians, the *Journal* has become a stage for the training of medical editors, reviewers, and scientists of tomorrow.³ In the short history of the *Journal*, we have had more than 300 medical students involved in the editorial process including activities such as promoting the *Journal*, reviewing articles, copyediting, proofreading, and diagramming. All of this would not have been possible without our founders, who aimed to create this productive environment towards increasing visibility of medical students' publications, ¹ whilst maintaining the highest quality^{2,4-6} and allowing open-access, all without article publishing charge or a readers fee (diamond open-access).

In this historic last issue of 2020, we acknowledge the work of medical students all around the globe who are part of our way out of this pandemic, scientists that worked around this issue to help us understand the problem and solve its challenges, and to healthcare workers for their care and resilience during the difficult situations that they have been exposed to over the past months. This pandemic has been one of the hardest tests for the medical profession in our generation. However, their values, highlighted in an interview published in the Journal two years ago, give us an answer of what was going to happen: "In every crisis, the answer to new challenges is to deliver the best care possible while also carrying out investigative work to push back the boundaries of science and improve medicine". It is now time to move into a better tomorrow where all of the lessons that 2020 has left us can be used to help us to grow stronger as one humanity.

In the last issue of the year, we are publishing analyses of local and global data,9 one at national level in Mexico; going from COVID-199,10 to oncology,11 medical education,12 internet addiction,13 screening information readability,14 and hypertension.15 Furthermore, this issue includes updates on cancer immunotherapy16 and glucose-6-phosphate dehydrogenase deficiency.17 In addition, you will find reports of cases about a challenging anesthetic case,18 polysensitivity to unrelated drugs,19 and an oncological patient with a atypical lymphatic drainage.20 As in previous issues,21-56 we are sharing the experiences of medical students and recently graduated physicians around the globe. COVID-

encourage readers to submit their comments to *IJMS* as Letters to the Editor, we have had comments on two previously published articles, ⁶³ as well as comments on COVID-19 relapse vs. reinfection, ⁶⁸ online open book examinations for medical students, ⁶⁹ and a call for action for a group of first responders: firefighters. ⁷⁰

One of the lessons gleaned from the COVID-19 pandemic is discussed by MacArthur et al., where the authors assess the way in which the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated existing gender inequalities within research; specifically, the lower rates of women submitting articles during the pandemic compared to men.71 This is of particular interest as the gender gap in medical school has been declining in recent years. Countries including the United States, United Kingdom, and Australia have seen female medical student admissions outnumber male admissions for the first time in history.72-74 Nevertheless, amidst a 21st century backdrop of increasing (albeit imperfect) gender equity and fourth-wave feminism,75 this editorial provides a timely reminder that female success in the medical profession goes beyond medical school acceptance. Once women are accepted into medical school, they still face the remnants of an once male-dominated field.76,77 For all genders, success in this field becomes more complicated during a pandemic and research involvement is a large part of this success. In addition to the positive implications that publishing research has on one's career, student research must not be overlooked as an influential form of advocacy. Research is a channel through which medical students can project their voices and promote discussion towards change regarding medical curriculum, research accessibility, research options, and mentoring.

The history of medicine and medical research has been irrevocably marked by gender, racial, and socioeconomic discrimination. In the wake of COVID-19 intensifying existing inequalities, MacArthur et al. ultimately reinforce the need to work strategically, taking an intersectional approach to prevent these inequalities. The addition to being committed to tackling these inequalities, the Executive Committee of the Journal is striving to identify and engage female doctors and researchers in editorial and leadership roles within the Journal. One recent example of this is the Communications and Public Relations Committee (CPR-C), which is lead by Dr. Georgiana Farrugia-Bonnici. As of December 17th 2020, the IJMS CPR-C boasts three Regional Ambassadors for Europe, Africa, and America with two women broaders to provide to North Ph. (10/25) women as official

benefit the *IJMS* by boosting social media presence, and spreading positive messages about the *Journal* amongst medical students enrolled in different universities worldwide, ultimately aiming to inform medical students about the numerous opportunities for growth that are offered within the *Journal*.

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encompasses the experiences of medical students working side-by-side with healthcare providers battling against the pandemic,^{57,58} lessons arising from the challenges of leading a free-clinic,⁵⁹ and strategies to promote mental health,⁶⁰ and learning opportunities during this time.⁶¹ Furthermore, we highlight the experience of a cornea harvester's history and the lessons that can be learned from it.⁶² Finally, as we

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Nevertheless, the path to gender equity is still long and arduous. Although we are committed to gender inclusion, we have seen the same pattern of higher proportions of men enrolled in the *Journal* over time. We hope that this editorial also serves as a call for new applicants to all different positions in the *Journal*.

Finally, there are some changes in the *Journal* that are worth mentioning. Since all reviewers have had the chance to confirm their review records on <u>Publons</u>, we will be publishing our last acknowledgement of peer-reviewers this year. Additionally, we have encouraged all of our team members to complete and graduate from the course provided by the <u>Publons Academy</u> and become a certified peer-reviewer with the aim of increasing the quality of our work. Nonetheless, we will not finish a tradition without starting a new one. The "IJMS Student Editors of the Year" will be given to a Student Editor who has been enrolled in the *Journal* for over a year and has demonstrated passion for the work that we do by exhibiting the spirit of collaboration, participation in the *Journal* activities, and the highest

grade of commitment to the work that we publish. This year, we are recognizing *Madeleine J. Cox* from the University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia, and *Nikoleta Tellios* from the University College Cork, Ireland as the *IJMS* Student Editors of the Year. We also make a special mention for *Adnan Mujanovic* from the University of Tuzla Medical Faculty, Bosnia and Herzegovina, *Ciara Egan* from the Humanitas University, Milan, Italy, *Leah Komer* from the University College Cork, Ireland, and *Sohaib Haseeb* from James Cook University, Townsville, Queensland, Australia, for their commitment to the *Journal* activities, dedication, and detailed revisions of the work being published in the issue 3, volume 8 of 2020, of the *IJMS*.

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