

NEW DIRECTIONS

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The Singapore Medical Journal is now in its 36th volume. It has come a long way since its birth. From humble beginnings, it has grown in stature and is now internationally known through the Index Medicus. Although its 50th Anniversary is still a long way more, it is now perhaps an opportune time to chart new directions. It is time to place the readers' interests foremost in future issues. In this regard, beginning with the August 1995 issue, changes will be made in the format of the Journal from time to time. Innovative ideas from readers are most welcome by the Editorial Board and, if possible, adopted so that this official organ of the Singapore Medical Association can be a beacon of medical knowledge which will do Singapore proud.

Editorials

Every issue will have one or more Editorials which may be written in-house or invited. In these Editorials, topical issues of current interest to the medical fraternity will be given prominence.

Format of the Table of Contents (TOC)

An innovative change has been introduced in the August 1995 issue with regard to the Original Articles. All articles are categorised according to major specialties (and in some instances sub-specialties) so that the reader need not laboriously go through the entire TOC to find out whether there is any article of interest to him or her.

Letters to the Editor

Although previous attempts had not been very encouraging, this Section will be introduced again in the December 1995 issue. This section is important as it provides an avenue for readers to comment on recently published papers. Each submission will

not be vetted by the Editorial Board unless it records new observations. However, it should not be used as a platform for vindictive attacks. Scathing remarks which are political, religious or of no academic value will not be published. Each letter must not be longer than 400 words and must include a word count. Proofs will not normally be supplied. There should be no more than 5 references. All authors need to sign the letter and provide current appointments.

Brief Communications

This is another innovation which will be introduced for the December 1995 issue. A brief report of new findings can be rapidly published before a full paper is submitted. It should not be more than 1 printed page – inclusive of illustrations, graphs or tables. If any submission is estimated to take more than 1 page, the author(s) will be asked to shorten the report accordingly. The format is the same as that for the full length articles. (Please refer to The SMJ Editorial Note which was published in the Feb 1995 issue).

Peer Review

Finally, a word about peer review. All submissions to be Journal will be peer reviewed. As in the past, due to our small pool of Reviewers, papers will be reviewed by one Reviewer. Borderlines cases will be reviewed by at least two Reviewers. If the two reports are not decisive, the paper will be sent to a third Reviewer. If a paper is multidisciplinary, it will be sent to as many experts as may be necessary to obtain a proper review of it.

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