

Letters from the TSMJ Committee



The practice of medicine is a dynamic and colourful art. The multi-disciplinary team approach is now the gold standard of medical care. This year's edition of the TSMJ reflects this shift, and proudly contains articles submitted from across the Trinity Health Science Faculty. We all have different insights to offer, and we can learn from the experiences of others. As the practice of medicine is changing, so too are the populations we serve, and the issues they face. This edition presents a discussion on key challenges we will encounter on a day-to-day basis in our professions, and guides us in how to avoid pitfalls in our practice. One of our authors discusses problems faced by the LGBT community, and shows how we as healthcare professionals can be sensitive in our approach to people of all orientations and gender identities. Another highlights for us the oft-overlooked area of sexual health in the elderly.

Keeping abreast of new treatment options is an important component of being an effective health care provider. As novel therapies are constantly coming on stream, we have a duty to our patients to stay informed. The use of doll therapy in the treatment of patients with Alzheimer's disease and the improvement this may provide for them and their families is explored. We also question if FDA-approved medical devices can be trusted. Fresh research emerges daily as we strive to understand the intricacies of the human body and disease processes. One author asks if the autoimmune hypothesis for multiple sclerosis, widely held as the most valid explanation, is indeed correct. Another looks at whether the animal models we have been using for African Sleeping Sickness properly reflect the disease process in humans. We are reminded to never stop questioning what is an ever-changing wealth of knowledge.

We are trained to care for our patients, but do we take time to take care of ourselves? Do we take time to reflect on our own journey and education? Mental health among medical students is explored in this edition of the TSMJ, and one international student shares his story of arriving at the gates of Trinity College and what lay ahead for him. An important component of our training is to intelligently consider all aspects of a contentious issue. What are your present thoughts on abortion education

for healthcare professionals? One author proposes it should factor in to our undergraduate education, and we include a reply from the School of Medicine as to why it doesn't appear on the current curriculum.

Our time in college will shape our future careers in many ways, so what happens when we get to choose a little bit of our course along the way? Can our author convince you to risk the intensity of the ICU for your elective? Or perhaps the tales from Malawi will be more to your taste... This edition also introduces medConnect, a new resource for medical students looking to dedicate their elective time to work in a developing country.

As healthcare professionals we have to appreciate the myriad influences on our decision making, from public health to economic factors. As the old adage goes, prevention is better than cure, and here we have a discussion about public health initiatives for the prevention of diabetes and the associated ethics. Another author investigates the link between proper dental hygiene and improved glycaemic control. With Ireland in financial crisis, the government is reacting by making cuts, but does this always make sense? A strong fiscal argument can be made for improving access to methadone programmes in Ireland; can the maths be ignored?

On a final note, I'd like to thank all the authors and editors who worked with such enthusiasm and dedication to make such a thought-provoking and enlightening 13th edition of the TSMJ. I'm am heartened and encouraged by the large response from many of our Health Science disciplines, and sincerely hope this will continue to expand so that the TSMJ too can benefit from a multi-disciplinary approach. We will be shaping the future of health care together.

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Editor-in-Chief
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