

# Guest Editorial

This year is the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the University of Malta Medical School journal. Originally titled *Maltese Medical Journal*, the first issue was published in 1989. The old series saw annual volumes with one or more issues being published annually, except for 2001 when no issue saw the light of day. In 2002, the official Faculty journal was revisited with an update in format and name. Now titled *Malta Medical Journal*, the refereed journal is a multidisciplinary medical journal that aims to publish high-quality papers written in English, dealing with all aspects of medicine.

The journal has become increasingly popular with local contributors resulting in an increase in the number of issue annually. It also receives a number of contributions from overseas. It has also established a presence on the World Wide Web with its own dedicated open access website. This international exposure has resulted in the journal being listed and referenced in a number of professional search engines and databases. This success has not been an easy one. The increase in article numbers has made greater demands on the time of the editorial board and the supporting article referees. The main hurdle has however been a financial one resulting from a dearth of advertisement support funds caused by the recent economic recession. To maintain continuity, the editorial board has decided to continue with electronic-only publication pending the availability of sufficient funds to ensure paper hard-copy publication.

The 25-year history of publication of this faculty journal makes this the longest-running medical journal in Malta. The first medical journal published in Malta was *L'Ape Melitensis*, first published in 1838. The journal included reviews and abstracts from continental medical publications besides several original papers. This journal, however, had a relatively short life with only four monthly issues being published. In 1841, another medical journal - *Il Filocano* - was launched, but this also had a short publication life and ceased publication in 1842. The

third attempt at publishing a medical journal had better success, and *Il Barth* saw regular publication from 1871 up to 1877. In the subsequent decades several attempts were made to launch a regular medical journal, but these efforts were of short duration: *La Rivista Medica* 1890-1892 and resurrected for a few issues in 1922; *La Salute Publica* 1897. More prolonged publication was achieved by the *St. Luke's Hospital Gazette* initiated in 1966. This journal was published for the Consultant Staff Committee working at St. Luke's Hospital, the Medical and Dental Surgery Faculties of the University and the Association of Surgeons and Physicians of Malta. This journal continued regular publication until 1976.

Other medical and paramedical associations also initiated efforts to publish a general or specialised medical journal. The medical student body, originally the British Medical Students Association [Malta], in 1949 launched an often irregular publication with the title *Chestpiece*. This journal continued publication until 1979 and was subsequently replaced by *Mediscope* in 1983 and *Murmur* in 1992. The latter is still being published. The Association of Anaesthesiologists in Malta in 1983 issued the first edition of the annual *Acta Anaesthesiologia Melitensis* that ran for six issues. Paramedical associations who also set out to publish a regular journal for their members included pharmacists and midwives.

The term-of-office of the current editorial board ends with this issue. The outgoing board augurs the journal "*AD MULTOS ANNOS*" thus continuing to serve as the medium advertising the research efforts of the Medical School's academic staff.

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Guest Editor