

FOREWORD MESSAGE

EDITORIAL: THE ROLE OF THE DOCTOR IN TIME OF CRISIS



I am very delighted to be once again invited by the Malta Medical Students' Association (MMSA) to write the editorial for this issue of Minima Medicamenta. It brings back nostalgic memories of when I myself was the Editor of the 'Murmur', which at the time was the MMSA's student magazine, the content of which was more of a lighter nature. MMSA has made giant leaps, and as evidenced by this particular issue, medical students are getting involved in authoring high quality scientific work.

While the coronavirus pandemic is still raging on, the war in Ukraine is sadly causing human tragedies on a daily basis. In addition, thousands of international medical students have been caught up in the middle of this crisis, forced to interrupt their studies and flee the country, with no transcript or any evidence that they were studying medicine. There is a big shortage in university places leading to a medical doctorate in other countries, while at the same time, transferring to a different university is quite complicated due to differences in curriculums, the documentation required and additional costs. In situations like these, one has to pause and appreciate the medical education that is available on our island and that is so often taken for granted.

The University of Malta is a highly regarded and historic university and has a long history of medical education. The MD Programme offered by the Faculty of Medicine and Surgery and awarded by the University of Malta has been accredited by the Association of Medical Schools in Europe and ASIIN, a German accreditation institution. As a result of these accreditations of the MD degree, University of Malta medical graduates have more opportunities for mobility and lifelong learning at an international level.

The engagement of medical students in medical education is of vital importance. After all, according to Rudolf Virchow (1821-1902): "Medical education does not exist to provide students with a way of making a living, but to ensure the health of the community." A doctor's role is not only to diagnose and cure, but also to inform and educate society. Medicine is not only a science; it is also an art. It deals with the very processes of life, which must be understood before they may be guided.

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