



editorial

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A new editor arrives

'The art of progress is to preserve order amid change and to preserve change amid order' (Alfred North Whitehead)

It was a great honour to be appointed editor of the *Psychiatric Bulletin* in July 2007, yet this is tinged with the realisation that my predecessor Professor Tom Fahy is an impressive act to follow. Under his stewardship, the *Bulletin* has developed and expanded its reach, especially to trainees, such that they are now responsible for 30% of its papers (George *et al*, 2006), making it a unique asset in helping psychiatrists in early training to achieve publications. The valued status that it now enjoys has been assisted in no small part by the editorial board, through its advice and support, as well as its tireless work reviewing and writing papers.

So I take over a vibrant and exciting journal and hope to guide it to its next stage of development. The greatest challenge is now to secure indexing of the *Bulletin* in the world's largest medical database, Medline. The Trojan work of Tom Fahy places it in a strong position to advance towards this goal.

One of the great attractions of the *Bulletin* is its accessibility, homeliness and familiarity and its huge popularity among psychiatrists. In this respect it could be likened to a family: the e-interviews, with accompanying pictures, bring us the thoughts and ideas of those known to us by reputation, like distant cousins; the obituaries, often with grainy, old photographs, more closely resemble the meeting of neighbours at a wake as anecdotes from the past evoke memories of happier times; the wisdom and knowledge of the sages who write the scientific papers recall for us the practical advice we received from our elders, while the book reviews remind us that we must not be too enmeshed but must look outside our immediate environment for inspiration and knowledge. And all the time *la grande dame*, the Royal College of Psychiatrists, presides over us, guiding us with her wisdom.

Change frequently engenders doubt, and inevitably there may be fears that this new editor, in trying to achieve the objective of indexing, will be swept along by its tyranny and by the lure of the impact factor, and in so doing will sully a journal that is valued and trusted. There are no proposals to alter any of the elements I have already mentioned, although the goal of becoming indexed and of enhancing the *Bulletin's* learned status will not be achieved without some alterations. One that is

being considered is an increase in size, thereby allowing for lengthier papers. Indeed, this should be welcomed by most authors, as restraint is an unlikely commodity among those wishing to bring scientific advances to their audiences. In this regard psychiatrists are no different from other researchers and a bigger journal will hopefully attract a greater diversity of scientific papers.

Other alterations that will be considered are a makeover for the cover and referencing system so as to facilitate closer ties with the *British Journal of Psychiatry* and ease of submission across continents, where most learned journals use a different referencing style. Finally, we must think internationally and encourage a wider and more diverse audience to view the *Bulletin* as worthy of consideration when deciding on where to submit their papers. This is undoubtedly the most demanding requirement facing the *Bulletin* if indexing is to be considered.

And these developments must happen while the journal continues as the organ of communication between the College and its membership, as was originally intended when it was the college newsletter.

The future will be challenging for both me and the editorial board. Yet the possibilities are boundless. The title of this journal, *Psychiatric Bulletin*, may also be ripe for change, as it implies the reporting of news and the generation of lists, which for many years have not been part of its business. We hope we can create a journal that is informative, relevant to research and practice, and a joy to read. With the right mix of contributors we should have no difficulty in achieving this and extending its impact beyond the shores of these islands to the 'four corners of the earth'. So please start now.

Declaration of interest

P.C. is Editor of the *Psychiatric Bulletin*.

Reference

GEORGE, S., DHAYA, D. & OYEBODE, F. *Psychiatric Bulletin*. *Psychiatric Bulletin*, (2006) Five-year study (2000–2004) of trainees' publications in the **30**, 306–308.

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