

Changing of the Guard

Prof Vernon Min-Sen Oh, Editor (1 June 2004 - 31 May 2010)



Professor Vernon Oh, having completed three terms as the chief editor of the *Annals, Academy of Medicine Singapore* (AAMS), has relinquished his post with effect from 1 June 2010.

Under his able stewardship over this period, the AAMS has accomplished a lot. He was responsible for revamping the Editorial Board by appointing a forward-looking and energetic group. Under his charge, the AAMS was given a make-over. The covers of the journal began featuring striking photographs and paintings from local and international contributors, each accompanied by a pithy, humanistic, and thought-provoking quote. Professor Oh facilitated the development of a more efficient manuscript review system and online access for authors.

He expanded the recruitment of overseas reviewers, and implemented ways to improve the citation of journal articles, among many specific process improvements. With better efficacy and visibility, the Science Citation Index's journal impact factor of the AAMS has tripled over the past few years. Whilst the improvements appear modest, these achievements were made under various constraints and limitations.

On a more personal note, we will miss Professor Oh's leadership and drive. His engaging personality and his philosophical views frequently enlivened the Editorial Board meetings. He rarely imposed his views, but listened well and showered us with his wisdom and experience. Despite his seniority and august visage, he maintained on numerous occasions that he still possessed a youthful exuberance. So, instead of retiring him to "obscurity", we are pleased to announce that the Academy's Council has appointed Professor Oh as Emeritus Editor, and that he will continue to serve on the Board.

Taking over as chief editor of AAMS, I will face numerous challenges ahead. Indeed, biomedical journal publication has rapidly transformed, with a shift to more comprehensive online publication system and the easy availability of information in the mass media. Like other journals, the AAMS needs to compete for high-level clinical and translational research papers and up-to-date reviews. Whilst the impact factor is often used as a barometer for academic excellence, grant awards and sometimes staff promotions even, we must be cognisant of the fact that our primary mission is to serve the needs of the medical community, and this mission will be factored into any new changes that we plan to implement.

New people will join the editorial team, and the roles of the Associate Editors and the Editorial Board will be reviewed and expanded. We will listen to, and cater to the needs of, our readers. Additional features such as historical biographies and interviews may be introduced if there is a broad interest. Importantly, we will continue to strive to achieve timely decisions on manuscripts. As the lead medical journal in Singapore, the AAMS will diligently develop a strong team to compete, adapt, and evolve with the changing publishing landscape.

On behalf of the editorial staff, I wish sincerely to thank Professor Oh for his outstanding service. I also take this opportunity to bid a fond farewell to Ms Bee-Choon Yong, our senior executive, who will be leaving us after 17 years of impeccable editorial contribution.

Dr Eng-King Tan
Editor