

A Fresh Start

VMS Oh,¹*FAMS, MD, FRCP*

“The artist may be well advised to keep his work to himself till it is completed ... but the scientist is wiser not to withhold a single finding or a single conjecture from publicity.”

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

In the May 2004 issue of the *Annals*, Dr Felix Sundram (the immediate past editor) described the history of this journal since 1972. As the editor since July 2004, I take this opportunity to thank Dr Sundram for his sterling service to the *Annals* since 1990. I have myself contributed to the journal as a peer reviewer since 1982, and a member of the editorial board since 1991.

Act 5, Scene 1 – As only the fifth editor in 32 years, my first action was to agree to serve for the next 4 years only. I believe that editors, like any other executive, should work for a specified term. The other editorial board members will similarly have term appointments, although sometimes the board may choose to transfer one or two editors to the Specialist Advisory Panel for as long as they can help the journal to evolve.

Act 5, Scene 2 – I propose to guide the *Annals* to fruition on several fronts, designed to make it author-friendly. Firstly, we propose to achieve, as soon as practicable, a seamless process of Web-based submission, peer review, editing, and publication. Secondly, we intend to introduce images and videos for readers to access online; we should exploit every suitable learning and memory aid. Lastly, we will take all appropriate measures to enhance the submission of high-grade articles, including a lively correspondence section, so that the citation rate and impact factor will increase. This must happen or the journal will not survive the selection forces in the publishing environment.

Readers and Fellows of the Academy of Medicine, Singapore with its 6 Colleges and 4 Chapters can rest assured that the journal's peer review process will retain its integrity. Journal editors everywhere are actively engaged in fighting the rise of research and publication fraud and other unethical behaviours. In this era of competitive publishing, we rely on the enthusiasm and scientific rigour of our independent reviewers to boost the knowledge value of our articles.

I thank all of you who have contributed in any capacity to the *Annals* in 2004, and wish you very well. Together, let us do whatever it takes to produce a better journal.

REFERENCES

1. von Goethe JW. Essay on Experimentation, 1829. Quoted in: JW von Goethe. Scientific Studies. In: Miller DE, editor and translator. New York: Suhrkamp, 1988.

¹ Professor and Senior Consultant Physician

Division of General Medicine and Therapeutics, Department of Medicine
National University of Singapore

Address of Correspondence: Professor Vernon MS Oh, Department of Medicine, National University Hospital, 5 Lower Kent Ridge Road, Singapore 119074.

Email: mdcohms@leonis.nus.edu.sg