

Searching for uniform standards for family medicine – new horizons

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A reality

As the new Regional Vice President I am thrilled that the *Wonca Asia Pacific Family Medicine* journal is now a reality, with the launch of this first issue. My appreciation and congratulations go to the editorial board and the publisher Blackwell Science Asia for the ground-breaking work to set up this journal.

The aim of the journal, I understand, is to provide a forum for the dissemination of high quality regional research and to enhance the standards of family medicine by focusing on best practice.

The editorial office will be based at the Philippine Academy of Family Physicians. The journal has received a number of generous donations from Macau, Taipei and a personal donation from Professor Hideyasu Aoyama of Japan.

The journal also needs plenty of contributors for commentaries, review articles and case studies. Let me invite you to be a contributor and encourage others to do so.

The potential

Certainly the journal will play a great role in complementing existing journals in the region, in terms of content and scope. It will be important for disseminating knowledge of what different countries are doing and experiencing, as well as providing a forum for sharing views, ideas and even concerns and expectations across the whole Asia Pacific region. However, its most important contribution is likely to be that the diffusion of knowledge will encourage more uniform standards of family practice, within our region, despite the great geographical diversity that exists.

The largest niche this journal can fill is to chronicle,

in one language the important and interesting developments in family medicine in this part of the world. The case studies, commentaries and discussions will act as peepholes into the casemix seen across all countries in the region. This will be the first time this has been able to be done.

The horizons

The horizons of the Asia Pacific region stretch from Mongolia in the west to Fiji in the east, from China in the north to New Zealand in the south. Within this diversity of lands there are some common strategies. These are: Health For All through primary care; preventive focus for infection control and chronic disease control; use of appropriate technology; intersectoral collaboration and community participation.

Regional conferences

The Asia Pacific Regional Conference, Christchurch 2000 had a total of 800 participants (consisting of 180 Asia Pacific, 568 local, 52 rest of the world); 208 papers were presented; there were 28 booth exhibitors and nine social programs.

We look forward to the Asia Pacific 2002 Regional Conference in Kuala Lumpur. The dates are 31 March–4 April 2002 and the venue will be the Shangri-La Hotel, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The conference will be hosted by the Academy of Family Physicians of Malaysia. The theme of the conference is 'Towards Quality in the Practice of Family Medicine.' The 2003 Regional Conference will be in Beijing with the theme will be 'Establish a Team of Qualified Generalist Physicians in the New Century.' The 2005 Regional Conference will be hosted by the Japanese Academy of Primary Care Physicians in Kyoto on 27–31 May 2005.

Conclusion

I wish the *Asia Pacific Family Medicine* journal a great journey ahead. Let all of us contribute to its sustainability as the Asia Pacific beacon to guide our learning, research and practice.

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