

Editor's note

A renowned family practice journal conducted a readers' survey and was dismayed to discover that the section least valued by the readers is the original research articles! Perhaps the research conducted was too esoteric and of little relevance to the real world of family practice? We all know that a vibrant research activity is the mark of the maturing of a scientific discipline. So, *The Family Physician* will continue to give prominence to research about family practice, or those conducted by family physicians, which aims to improve the quality of primary medical care. In this issue, the research by Loh LC (page 10) has demonstrated the inadequacy of basing asthma evaluation purely on symptoms and peak flow – a timely reminder for all of us to reassess the way we manage our asthmatic patients.

Most of us like to discuss our interesting or challenging patients with our colleagues. While the *Family Physician* wishes to publish case reports that suggest the emergence of a new disease or the first documentation of the unusual manifestations of a known disease, these situations are rarely observed in a typical family practice clinic. More frequently we are stumped by a relatively rare disease or embarrassed to find we have committed yet another error in diagnosis or treatment (despite our best intention). Both these types of lessons are of educational value to our colleagues - as demonstrated by the case reports by Mimi Omar (page 15) and Loh KY (page 16) in this issue.

This issue also continues to publish EBM commentary and introduced a new section called Abstracts. These short papers are "bite chunks" of evidence - the EBM commentary leads from a focused clinical question that arise in a clinical encounter, while the Abstracts are brief summaries of research papers published elsewhere. We believe these kinds of appraised evidence will assist in the hitherto slow process of implementing research findings in actual clinical practice. Due to the broad interest and varied practice patterns of family physicians, our selection of a few abstracts can hardly educate more than a few of you. We encourage readers to submit abstracts of research paper that are useful or those that have been recently discussed in the local journal clubs.

The Internet is a virtual library of gigantic proportion and it is easy to get lost in this ever enlarging information "cyber-jungle". In each issue of the *Family Physician*, certain websites will be reviewed to provide

the readers with useful tips when surfing the Internet. For a start, the electronic journals of family medicine and primary care are reviewed (page 21).

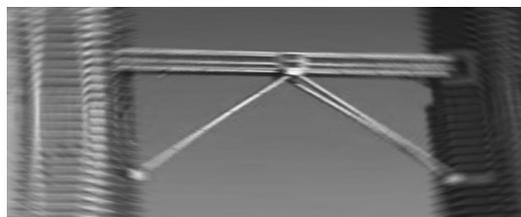
Recognising the need to jump start research by the family physicians in the community, we have requested several primary care researchers to write a series called Research Notes - these are short reviews of the various steps of conducting a research project, from research question all the way to medical writing and publishing. These papers will be published in three installments. In this issue, the first four articles take the reader to the step of writing proposal.

Research Notes in the forthcoming issue:

- What study design should I choose?
- How to do a survey?
- Where to obtain research funding?

If you wish to submit a paper, please check out the Instructions for Authors on page 34. Please take note that this journal now requires authors to declare source of funding and conflicts of interest in all submissions.

All papers published in this issue are available in Portable Document Format (PDF). If you have internet access, you can click [Full text], [PubMed] or [Link] to access additional information in the original journal website, PubMed abstract or other web pages. Members of AFPM may obtain any reprint by send an email request to Ms Sarasu (sara@afpm.org.my).



The *Family Physician* endeavours to become one of the best family medicine journals and join the rank of the indexed journals. This goal may be a distant blurry image at the moment (as shown in the modified view of a famous bridge in Malaysia), but it is definitely a reachable goal.

We are very keen to receive feedback, kindly send your comments to the Chief Editor: tengcl@gmail.com