

The Autonomous Practitioner (Editorial)

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Guest Editor for this Issue

As Acting Editor for this issue, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to the first issue in the third volume of the Scottish Universities Medical Journal (SUMJ). It is with great pleasure and pride that we present to you a wealth of literature detailing modern concerns within the medical arena, and we have articles in this issue which should cater for our entire readership.

The issue of autonomy in contemporary health care has produced great discussion in recent years¹, but what happens when management and clinical policy limits the autonomy of health care professionals? Falahati² addresses this in the article '*What is the Scope of Autonomy in Medical Practice*'², whereby the weight of autonomy is pitted alongside other ethical principles. It is true that if we are to be autonomous practitioners we must make effective decisions, but how do the decisions we make affect our ability to practise ethically? Falahati examines this argument in detail, thus presenting an effective and successful article.

In this issue we present two articles by Dr Gemma Smith, who examines the ways in which available tools can help in the assessment and management of those suffering from a suspected stroke. Smith does this by inspecting the mortality and morbidity rates associated with stroke³, therefore looking at ways to treat the condition, such as anti-coagulant therapy and blood pressure control. In her article '*Secondary Prevention and Rehabilitation after a Stroke*'⁴, Smith goes further by looking at the risks of recurring strokes, making suggestions on possible interventions which can be made for stroke management. Indeed, Smith asserts that the rehabilitation process should involve input from the multi-disciplinary team, leading to the question of whether or not multi-disciplinary working limits autonomy and independent practice in contemporary health care.

This issue of the SUMJ also includes an article by Professor John Iredale which looks at the potential tracks to success in a career involving clinical research⁵. Iredale offers tips to medical students who intend to pursue a career as a clinical academic by examining the ways in which students can access such courses. He finishes by stating that PhD funding has never been better; indeed, the Wellcome Trust has almost doubled the number of PhD opportunities available for UK medical graduates⁵. Therefore, if you are interested in developing a career in clinical academia, Professor Iredale's article is both informative and inspiring.

In this issue of the SUMJ we are once again delighted to publish articles from a wide range of disciplines, spanning myriad levels of experience and knowledge. The SUMJ continues to pride itself on publishing the work of Doctors, Consultants, Clinical Lecturers, Medical Students, Nursing Students and all other health professionals, and it is the time and effort of these individuals which ensures the journal goes from strength to strength.

We would like to thank all of the contributors who continue to submit articles, and to once again clarify that all submitted articles are taken into consideration by the committee.

I would like to finish by thanking all of my fellow committee members for their support and assistance throughout my time as Deputy Editor of the SUMJ. Throughout the year I have been given opportunities to expand my knowledge and improve my practice, and working for the journal has provided me with great pleasure and satisfaction. As this is the last issue under my editorship, I would like to thank the committee and our readership. Most importantly, I would like to wish good luck to the future SUMJ committee, and I hope that the journal continues to improve under the new committee which will be elected in the near future.

Thank you.

References

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2. FALAHATI, S. (2014). 'What is the Scope of Autonomy in Medical Practice?' Scottish Universities Medical Journal, 3(1).
3. SMITH, G. (2014). 'Acute Stroke – Diagnosis and Management'. Scottish Universities Medical Journal, 3(1).
4. SMITH, G. (2014). 'Secondary Prevention and Rehabilitation after a Stroke'. Scottish Universities Medical Journal, 3(1).
5. IREDALE, J. (2014). 'A Career Involving Clinical Research – Potential Tracks to Success'. Scottish Universities Medical Journal, 3(1).