

Better Together? The NHS in an Independent Scotland (Editorial)

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EDITORIAL

As the Guest Editor for this Special Referendum Supplement, it gives me great pleasure to present myriad articles concerning the upcoming Referendum in Scotland. As Deputy Editor of the Scottish Universities Medical Journal, I have been thrilled at the response we have received from the surveys we carried out in both 2012 and 2013, and look forward to receiving feedback on the topic of Scottish Independence.



The upcoming Referendum has gathered much publicity in recent times and this issue of the Scottish Universities Medical Journal sets out to assemble some of these opinions for our readership. We have received numerous opinion pieces from politicians, medical and nursing professionals and campaigners, and here we have attempted to place these opinions within the political context of today.

We begin with an article by Willie Wilson, a former lecturer and researcher in Pharmacology at the University of Glasgow. In his article, Wilson argues that the only way to circumvent an entirely privatised NHS in Scotland is to vote ‘Yes’ for Independence¹, citing that free prescriptions may be an item of the past if Scotland were to stay within the United Kingdom. With high-profile figures being accused of using ‘scare’ tactics to urge Scottish people into voting ‘No’ – such as the recent case of Bill Munro² – Wilson’s argument is subtle yet powerful, asserting that scaremongering Scottish people should not have any bearing on those intending to vote ‘Yes’.

¹ Wilson, W. (2014). ‘NHS Scotland after the Referendum’. *Scottish Universities Medical Journal*, 3(S2), PP. S12-S13.

² Emerson, S. (2014). ‘Barrhead Travel Director Defends Anti-Yes Memo’. *The Scotsman*: 31.03.14. Available From: [<http://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/top-stories/barrhead-travel-director-defends-anti-yes-memo-1-3359505>]. Last Accessed: 23.04.14.

Despite commissioning articles in support of Scottish Independence, we have also strived to balance this issue by putting the spotlight on the 'Better Together' arguments. Jackson Carlaw (MSP) argues that clinicians and students should vote 'No' come the Referendum, claiming that Scotland needs the strength and security of being part of the United Kingdom³. Indeed, we have commissioned articles from three of the United Kingdom's largest political parties, all of whom have a strong case when arguing against an Independent Scotland.

We finish this supplement with Kevin Ferguson's powerful article supporting a 'Yes' vote in the Referendum. In his article, Ferguson argues that "NHS Scotland is not yet in the jaws of the beast as [those in England and Wales] are"⁴ (Page S33), putting forward a particularly strong opinion piece which stays true to the principles of the Radical Independence Campaign.

Whether you are intending to vote 'Yes' or 'No' in the upcoming Referendum, this Scottish Universities Medical Journal Special Supplement may assist you in making an informed choice come September 18th. We have published articles which we feel are relevant and committed to the cause, and we hope you can join us in celebrating the work of the contributing professionals by absorbing yourself in the articles.

In this supplement we are once again delighted to publish articles from a wide range of disciplines, spanning myriad levels of experience and knowledge. The Scottish Universities Medical Journal continues to pride itself on publishing the work of Consultants, Doctors, 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 also like to send a special thank you to the Politicians, Political Campaigners and Mental Health Nursing Lecturers who provided articles for this supplement; without your contributions, this would not have been possible.

³ Carlaw, J. (2014). 'Why Clinicians & Students Should Vote No'. Scottish Universities Medical Journal, 3(S2), PP. S22-S24.

⁴ Ferguson, K. (2014). 'The Case for an Independent Scotland'. Scottish Universities Medical Journal, 3(S2), PP. S32-S34.