

Editorial

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Health and science come together in myriad ways. Despite the diversity characterising the health sciences, the importance attached to optimal quality of life in the human being is common to all. The health science disciplines therefore feed into health care, which focuses on the diagnosis, management and prevention of impairments that impinge on the individual's health status. The remit of health sciences is wide-ranging. One can only imagine the wealth of knowledge that research in the various fields generates when considered collectively as an effort towards improving health care. It is precisely for this purpose that the Malta Journal of Health Sciences (MJHS) is being launched.

The brainchild of Professor Angela Xuereb, Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of Malta, the Journal is being set up with the aim of bringing together research from the various allied health disciplines. This is no mean feat, considering that the different health science professions embody a multiplicity of perspectives on health care research. However, it is a proposition that seems feasible, considering the positive response received from various sectors, locally and internationally.

It has now been almost a year since the Editorial Board rose to the challenge of launching the Journal. It has been a steep learning curve, but the team spirit of conviction and perseverance has seen us through the various obstacles. The Editorial Board members have all pooled their knowledge, experience, insight . . . and sheer hard work. They have done so thoughtfully and methodically. It has been a labour of love. Indeed, it might be the best editorial board an editor-in-chief could wish for!

It is with a deep sense of pride that we hereby launch the Malta Journal of Health Sciences. The peer-reviewed papers in this first issue address a range of topics. The invited paper by Professor Rizzo Naudi maps out the events that led to the foundation of the Institute of Health Care, which eventually developed into the Faculty of Health Sciences we know today. This historical

review should provide a useful reference for academics and students alike. The clinical commentary by Miller and colleagues addresses the psychophysiology of dyspnea in chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and calls for consideration of the psychological comorbidities in female patients. The research paper by Cassar and Formosa, which looks at foot health in pregnant women, underscores the relevance of providing foot care education and podiatry services to expectant mothers. Comparing the effectiveness of the Pilates method and traditional back exercises in treating low back pain, Fenech and colleagues report better long-term outcomes for the Pilates method, increasing the scientific evidence in support of this intervention method. Finally, Fenech and Scerri familiarise us with the dynamics of caring for a relative with severe mental illness, presenting findings that highlight caregivers' need for community support.

I trust that you will find these articles stimulating and intriguing. May they act as a trigger for further scientific debate. Naturally, the Editorial Board of the Malta Journal of Health Sciences would be interested in feedback about the impact of the articles published in terms of discussion and constructive follow-up. It also encourages reviews and commentaries on timely topics, as well as reports of original investigations related to various aspects of health science research. These contributions would assist in keeping the science of health care informed and alive.

Professor Angela Xuereb's compelling enthusiasm and constant encouragement has to be acknowledged in helping us to reach our goal. Heartfelt thanks also go to the Associate Editors, Dr Stephen Lungaro-Mifsud, Dr Josianne Scerri, Dr Victoria Sultana, Dr Vasilis Valdramidis and Dr Francis Zarb, for making this issue materialise with their commitment and unfailing support.

May all the energy that has gone into this first issue of the Malta Journal Health Sciences act as a stimulus for us to value health science research, engage in it and share it with our peers in the field.