

One year later

A year has elapsed since the University of Malta Medical School moved to its new premises at Mater Dei Hospital in Msida. This move brought the major teaching hospital in Malta in close proximity to the University of Malta. The initial period following the move presented a number of challenges which over the last year have been tackled.

The first ever final examinations in the course leading to the MD degree to be held in Mater Dei took place in June 2008 and this cohort of young doctors graduated formally last month. A number of students excelled and this issue of the MMJ attests to this excellence, highlighting the presentation of the Corinthia Prize in Paediatrics and the Examiners Prize in Medicine. Since June some of these promising young graduates have left our shores whilst others opted to stay here and continue their postgraduate training in Malta. All are to be congratulated for their success and the Faculty wishes these doctors all the best for the future. These sentiments were much evident at the Graduation Gala Dinner where graduands joined family, friends and members of the Faculty of Medicine to celebrate this event.

The new academic year meanwhile is well underway with the Faculty of Medicine continuing its commitment to improving medical education and maintaining standards through ongoing audit and curriculum revision. A record number of students joined the first year in Medicine this year necessitating review of the actual location of lectures and tutorials to accommodate the students. A number of departments saw the appointment of new Heads of Department, who are now faced with a number of fresh challenges given the changing face of medical education.

Similar challenges face members of staff at the new hospital with the ever increasing healthcare expenditure inherent to health service provision to an ever increasing elderly population.

New administrative responsibilities and the rapidly expanding postgraduate training programmes at Foundation Year, Basic Specialist and Higher Specialist levels mandate an increasing commitment to education. Patient care remains paramount however. One of the aims of the Malta Medical Journal is to provide a forum for the presentation of data specific to health care in Malta. It is hoped that data accrued in the course of research, clinical studies and audits can be applied to help planning, policy development and quality assurance as well as an equitable distribution of resources. Ultimately it is hoped that the Medical School and Mater Dei Hospital form the cornerstones upon which medical care, education and research can continue to flourish and develop.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank those who have submitted articles for consideration for publication in the MMJ over the years since my appointment as Editor as without their research and hard work the MMJ would not have achieved its current status. Heartfelt thanks are also due to all those reviewers whose input has been crucial in ensuring that the requisite standards are achieved, to our sponsors whose generosity enables us to provide this Journal at no charge to the medical community, and to the University and Medical School for their ongoing support of the MMJ. Finally I am indebted to the Editorial Board for their unstinting support and hard work, their teamspirit and their expertise without which it would be impossible to face the challenges that the production of the Malta Medical Journal entails. With them, I extend my sincere wishes to all for a healthy and prosperous 2009.

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Editor