

What is an editorial registrar?

Paul Grant

On attending my membership graduation ceremony at the Royal College of Physicians – some years ago now – I found that a copy of *Clinical Medicine* had been provided as a part of my graduation pack. I read it with interest, having never previously been aware of its existence in my pre-membership state, and was pleased to find out that here was a journal that covered all the things that were not only relevant to me as a hospital doctor, but also interesting and engaging.

Bob Allan, our former editor, was at that time very keen to target the ‘lost tribe’ of higher specialist trainees and new consultants that may be missing out on such a publication. Certainly the post-membership/pre-fellowship group of younger physicians were under-represented in the journal’s readership. The experience of being a medical registrar and working in hospital medicine means that one is exposed to a huge variety of acute and chronic disease that is raw, challenging and complex, and it is deeply important to be able to learn from, discuss and reflect on our work. Having a background in medical journalism and clinical research I was keen to get involved and I joined the editorial board of *Clinical Medicine* in 2007.

Since then, I feel the journal has continued to evolve and has become increasingly receptive to the needs and interests of the doctor still in training while not taking anything away from the fellows. Indeed, there is a huge overlap between the two. Recently it was decided that the editorial team wanted to create a formal position, an editor with special responsibility for the ‘younger physician’, and I was happy to take on this role. The position was originally described as a ‘membership editor’, a term perhaps less pejorative than ‘deputy editor’, but we eventually decided on ‘editorial registrar’ – a precedent which has already been set by the *BMJ*.

One of my first tasks has been to clarify what the goals of *Clinical Medicine* should be. I hope that many of you had the opportunity to read these in Humphrey Hodgson’s editorial in the

last issue. This is especially important as the RCP has recently sought to further its remit to include medical student, foundation doctor and associate members. Many may be reminded of the scene in the film *Citizen Kane*, when the young protagonist nobly sets forth the idealistic philosophy of his recently acquired *New York Inquirer*; obviously one wishes to avoid his fate. Fortunately we have an excellent editor to keep us on the right path, as well as a refreshed editorial board and of course a large readership of dedicated professionals to ensure that we do not lose our focus in producing a high quality medical journal.

‘Junior’ doctors themselves have diverse needs. In the early stages of their career they need to be informed, provoked and challenged. Future plans for *Clinical Medicine* revolve around increasing the awareness and uptake of the journal amongst pre-fellowship doctors; highlighting relevant content to trainees; new topics on the latest developments in the medical specialities; improving our educational content and not forgetting to look at the ‘non-medical’ side of medicine – for example, practical examples of clinical leadership in action, reflections on what senior fellows wished they’d known as a new consultant and exploration of the role that bodies such as the specialist training committee play in our careers.

We are also hoping to make the journal accessible via a wider range of media. All our content is available online (members and fellows of the RCP should visit www.rcplondon.ac.uk/resources/clinical-medicine-journal/member-access, while other readers can access our content at www.ingentaconnect.com/content/rcop/cm), and we have a functioning RSS feed on our Ingenta platform, as well as our microblogging Twitter contact (@RCPLondon), which means that you can communicate with us directly via your computer, smartphone or iPad.

Furthermore, a readership survey was launched in January this year and we look forward to finding out what you think of the journal so that we can continue to work on making it better.