

Hong Kong Dermatology & Venereology Bulletin in 1998: Progress and Retrospective Evaluation

It had been more than one year since the Hong Kong Dermatology & Venereology Bulletin became the official publication of our Society. It is therefore the appropriate time to review the progress of the Bulletin and make a retrospective evaluation in the past one year.

Ever since the Bulletin has been published in the present format, it has been circulated widely to all the members of our Society, related local and overseas medical personnel, local institutes including Social Hygiene Service, medical libraries of the two universities, and various major hospitals. It can also be browsed on the internet through the homepage of our Society or the Hong Kong Medical Association. The overall response is very encouraging. The libraries of the two local medical schools have displayed the Bulletin in their journal bookshelves; the Hospital Authority would put the Bulletin on their intranet this year so that their staff could access through their networking; and Blackwell Science Asia has enrolled our Bulletin into their catalogue of medical journals so that the foreign institutes could subscribe it if they wish.

Our readers have also sent lots of valuable advice and comment to the editorial board, and certainly this sort of positive feedback would be very helpful as regards to our future development. A reader's column would be useful and would be created if the pages could accommodate. Some readers also suggested that more pictures of dermatopathology should be included as well. This could be achieved with the help of our dermatopathologist colleagues and has been implemented.

Surprisingly, the materials available for publications are now more than expected. More involvement from the private sector has also been seen in the past one year, including the publication of editorial, original article and case report. At

the moment, the editorial board and the publisher are considering whether the pages of the Bulletin should be increased. Among the different columns, dermato-venereological quiz has attracted great interest from the readers, while the journal watch and the conference reports are useful for our busy fellow colleagues. Overall the main shortcoming of the Bulletin, as in most other local journals, is the lack of enough original papers, which are mandatory for any esteemed journal. Obviously this is because most local original articles of good quality have been sent to other indexed international journals for publication. While it is still unforeseeable when this sort of situation will be changed for the local publications, our Bulletin has a role in providing valuable local data about skin and sexually transmitted diseases in Hong Kong, and in providing chances for our young dermatologists to learn about the skill of journal writing. Local data is unique and useful for the epidemiological studies and health policy planning. Currently, the medical library of the Hong Kong University is building up a database of the local medical publications, and certainly this would be valuable for the future researchers.

The editorial board had been working very hard in the past one year to make the content more informative and precise, to make the format more standardized and presentable, and to ensure that the printing is of good quality. However, as all our editors are practicing doctors rather than full time professional editors, errors are unavoidable. Therefore there are still plenty of rooms for further improvement. We are still groping our way along the dark corridor and urging the support from our whole specialty to make this bulletin a success. Hopefully our Bulletin could further improve and achieve a reputable status in the field of dermatology and venereology.

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