Editors’ welcome

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Introduction

Kia ora and welcome to Issue 33 of Te Hautaka o ngā Akonga Ron-goā, or the New Zealand Medical Student Journal (NZMSJ). This issue of the NZMSJ is themed “Collaboration in Healthcare”, a topic which is increasingly being recognised as integral to the advancement of clinical practice through high-quality research. Notable discoveries such as insulin, heparin, and the sinoatrial node by medical students would not have been possible without extensive inter- and intra-disciplinary collaboration. The motivation behind this issue theme is reinforced by the recent increase in volume and calibre of research conducted entirely by medical students, together with the numerous demonstrated benefits of collaborative research involving scientists and clinicians from a variety of backgrounds. This includes minimising research output waste and increasing the overall quality of research produced. We are incredibly privileged to feature high-quality and stimulating articles exemplifying the results of collaboration in health and research, which are all authored by medical students, clinicians and/or renowned academics from Aotearoa New Zealand (NZ).

A brief overview of articles within this issue

Issue 33 opens with an incredibly inspiring editorial by Sir Richard Faull, who shares his exciting journey in brain research in NZ. In this editorial, Sir Faull recount his life in medicine and brain research, which spans over four decades, and whose efforts have eventually culminated in the establishment of the Centre for Brain Research (CBR) flagship. The CBR is internationally recognised as a world-leading multi-disciplinary collaborative research centre, consisting of over 80 brain research groups (including approximately 450 researchers), over 40 clinicians, and more than 30 community organisations as of 2021. Above all, Sir Faull emphasises that collaboration, both within and across disciplines, is vital to succeeding in research, healthcare, and life. We are very grateful for the invaluable contribution Sir Faull has made to Issue 33 of the NZMSJ.

We are fortunate to feature an invited feature article by Chris Varghese on behalf of the Surgical Trainee, Audit, and Trials Aotearoa (STRATA) Collaborative, which is directly relevant to the theme of this issue. In this article, the STRATA Collaborative committee highlight what collaborative research entails, how the collaborative research model is currently being implemented within NZ, and why medical students, and especially those who are interested in surgery, should get involved.

In addition, and following on from our previous issue, we are proud to share two further “Clinical Pearls”. Dr Benjamin Gladwin discusses the pathophysiology and management of diabetic ketoacidosis and hyperosmolar hyperglycaemic state in the context of a patient with severe metabolic derangement who developed a rare complication in the intensive care unit (ICU) setting. Dr Anne Laking and Dr Isabelle Duck explore the impact of sexual violence and assault in NZ, and provide proactive and practical approaches and steps clinicians can take to both screen for interpersonal violence and sexual assault among patients and offer options for appropriate crisis support services which may be available.

This issue includes an outstanding array of original research articles, case reports, and academic essays authored by medical students and clinicians. Aneet Singh et al. audited the rates of adherence to oral metformin among Pacific Islander patients with type 2 diabetes mellitus at a Pacific-focused General Practice centre within NZ. Hannah Miles et al. evaluated the efficacy of Virtual First Special Appointments (VFSA) on specialist neurology services at Nelson Hospital when face-to-face consultations may not always be feasible, such as in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Natasha Mitchell et al. assessed whether smartphone applications may be useful in monitoring self-reported disease activity and progression in patients with inflammatory bowel disease, which may aid in patient-centred discussions in the outpatient setting. Sita Clark et al. reported on a rare case of hyperinsulinaemic hypoglycaemia in a patient without diabetes mellitus presenting with abnormal autonomic and neurological symptoms. Chaolan Zheng and Dr Oliver Dugena present a case of oculomasticity-gravis following treatment with Pembrolizumab for metastatic melanoma. Christopher Mayo provides a thought-provoking argument against the criminalisation of illicit substances in NZ through an academic essay which was the recipient of Population Health Intensive (PHI) Academic Essay Prize (The University of Auckland) in 2021. Gisela Kristono explored the epidemiology of acute myocardial infarction (i.e., heart attacks), including a discussion regarding the underlying health determinants, elegantly paving the direction and focus for future research and health interventions.

We are also incredibly appreciative of Dr Claire Cameron and colleagues from the Biostatistics Centre (University of Otago) for their regular contribution with a statistics primer, which in this issue, focuses on the importance of understanding and correct interpretation of confidence intervals in health research.

Acknowledgements and concluding remarks

The Editorial Board would like to acknowledge the Universities of Auckland and Otago for their invaluable academic and financial support in allowing the journal to grow. We wish to thank the Medical Assurance Society (MAS), Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists (RANZCP), New Zealand Dermatology Society Incorporated (NZDSI), Auckland Radiology Group, Specialty Trainees of New Zealand (SToNZ), and the Goodfellow Unit for their generosity in funding many of our initiatives this year. We are indebted to Catherine’s Creations, Medisave, Medshop, and the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS) for sponsoring our monthly Researcher Spotlight prize, and to the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RANZCOG) for their sponsor-
ship over our RANZCOG Blog Post Award, which will be awarded to the student with the best recognised blog post published on our blog this year. We are also incredibly grateful to the New Zealand Medical Journal (NZMJ) and especially its Editor-in-Chief, Professor Frank Frizelle, for his ongoing financial assistance with our annual Verrall Award, which is awarded to author(s) of the best academic research article published within either of our issues this year, and will be announced in the coming months. Not least of all, support from the New Zealand Medical Students’ Association (NZMSA), together with continued guidance and advice from our vastly experienced Advisory Board members has been critical to our progress this year and within this issue, and we are very thankful for your ongoing assistance. In closing, authors would like to express their gratitude toward Editorial and Commercial Boards, as well as our student and expert peer reviewers, who are often working tirelessly behind the scenes to enable publication of this issue in a timely manner.

We hope our readers will enjoy the breadth of stimulating academic and theme-related articles featured in Issue 33. We would especially like to congratulate all contributing authors, and encourage all of our readers to submit their work to the NZMSJ in the future.

Ko te ara tere ki angitū, ko te ara mātao, ko te ara tika ki angitū, ko te ara mahana (“if you want to go fast, go alone, if you want to go far, go together”).

References

