

Editorial: evolution of a journal

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This is the year of the bicentenary of the birth of Charles Darwin, providing a timely opportunity for all to ponder on evolution. *Neonatal, Paediatric and Child Health Nursing* has, as all things must, evolved, and is on its way to becoming an important international publication for all disciplines relating to the care of children. 'Children', to me, always means any human from birth, no matter how early, through to the older ones who use paediatric health services by choice.

Neonatal, Paediatric and Child Health Nursing has evolved since the early newsletters of the various disparate state organisations. A proper history needs to be begun about the development of the journal and the College of Children and Young People's Nurses, and now, with the inception of the College, is a good time to start, and how better than for the College itself to offer a grant or scholarship just for this?

I would like to give an indication here as to the sequence of development of the various newsletters into the journal, but cannot do so with any accuracy, except for Queensland, as I was heavily involved in bringing *The Australian Paediatric Nurse* into being as the journal of the Queensland Paediatric Nurses' Association. However, I do know that, at that time, in the 1980s, New South Wales, Western Australia and possibly other states also had journals and newsletters on the go, and perhaps before that. All these publications began life as ways to disseminate information about the relevant organisations, they provided clinical advice and case studies, and described the social interaction that is important in any functioning association.

With the emergence of evidence-based practice, something more was needed while, at the same time, the state organisations joined to become the Australian Confederation of Paediatric and Child Health Nurses. A similar pattern was occurring within Australia's neonatal nursing specialities. Natural selection demanded that the information that was necessary for nurses be retained, and the journal as we know it was born. As with any birth, such a road has not been easy. Australia is so vast that we often fall victim to the isolation that its size dictates, and needs of one group may be dissimilar to the needs of others. The challenge for those developing the journal (and the College) was to meet the needs of all – nurses in the various states, and in the three sub-specialities of community child health, neonatal care and paediatric nursing. No evolution is simple, and it is always a lengthy process.

Evolution is not static, and the journal will continue to evolve. We owe a great deal to those who have brought it this far, in particular to Kaye Spence and Shelly Reid, who, as editors, have its processes, recruitment of both authors and reviewers, and

generation of content; and to the journal management board, who have worked tirelessly to develop a true, peer-reviewed, high quality publication. Our thanks, as an organisation, to all.

What are my plans for the future development of *Neonatal, Paediatric and Child Health Nursing*? We must now turn the journal into a truly international publication. There are some issues around the type of advertising that appears; these are being addressed by the journal management board. Authors from both inside Australia and overseas have told me, personally, that they would not submit papers unless the ethical dilemmas around advertising breastmilk substitutes are dealt with, and that is being done. We can capitalise on the fact that we are in the unique situation of being the only specialist journal in the Asia-Pacific-Indian Ocean area. If we can recruit both authors and reviewers from the broad area, then we will be able to increase readership and subscriptions.

Further, many academics will not publish in journals which do not have an impact factor, and this calculation of journal useage is difficult to attain. However, it will be one of the aims of my term as editor to at least move this forward and try to have the journal with an impact factor by the end of 2012. Another aim is to have the journal in electronic form, so that libraries will buy it.

All these are huge asks. Perhaps I am being too ambitious. But, as Chairman Mao said, the most important part of any journey is the first step. However, first steps are made a lot safer when there has been some serious groundwork put in place, and so I thank Kaye, Shelley and all those who have been working on the journal for a long time for doing just that.

We have two associate editors, Ally Hutton, from Flinders University, and Denise Harrison from Sick Children's Hospital in Toronto. We will talk to each other on a regular basis. Val Carson will continue to provide administrative help, and the folk at Cambridge Media in Perth will continue to print the journal for us. I look forward to working with you all.

The most important people, though, are the readers, writers and reviewers. We can never have enough of those, so we ask everyone – current readers, members, and subscribers – to talk about the journal, and help us recruit new readership, authors and reviewers. The next year will be a busy one for me, but it will be exciting and challenging.

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