

EDITOR'S MESSAGE

History of the DMJ and its place in medical education

Every year at Dalhousie University medical students attend a Hippocratic Oath ceremony in the first weeks of their training. The modernized version emphasizes the importance for physicians to “constantly strive to add to [their] knowledge and skills” while being “willing to assist others to the same end.”¹ Likewise, in current practice, physicians are expected to maintain up-to-date clinical knowledge and utilize the best available evidence, afforded by an active research community, when caring for their patients. Many clinicians are required to regularly contribute their own research to these communities alongside their clinical responsibilities. With increasing research related expectations placed on physicians, it is essential that medical students have the proper skills and experience necessary to excel as future clinician-researchers.

Medical students at Dalhousie University are fortunate to receive introductory training in research methodology and critical appraisal, while also obtaining mentorship through the Research in Medicine (RIM) program. In addition, students have the opportunity to navigate the peer-review and manuscript editing process on their own when submitting their work to the Dalhousie Medical Journal.

Across Canada, student-run medical journals are becoming more common at medical schools. Faculty and students are advocating for the creation of peer-reviewed journals that give learners early exposure to the publication process.^{2,3} Thanks to the progressive thinking of three keen medical students in 1936, Dalhousie University has a long and rich history of a student run medical journal on campus.⁴

The DMJ was originally started with the goal of providing students with an opportunity to develop their medical knowledge and skill in research preparation while establishing a connection between students, faculty, and alumni. Early publications by the DMJ included original research, book reviews, opinion articles, medical history, and medical news. The journal took a hiatus from publication in 1969 but returned due to student support in 1995.⁴ Over the years the structure of the DMJ may have fluctuated but one thing that has not changed is its reliance on local physician peer-reviewers. Every research or review article submitted to the journal requires the insight and critique of multiple physicians or experts in the Dalhousie community who generously donate their time and expertise.

The DMJ publishes an issue twice annually to distribute on campus and prints over 3500 copies to be circulated through Doctors Nova Scotia to physicians across the province. The journal also

has a website with open-access to current and past issues dating back to 1936 with the goal of increasing its online impact in the future. The DMJ often focuses on Maritime research projects with student involvement that are of special interest to medical practice in the region. A range of submissions are accepted including humanities pieces such as artwork or poetry and an emphasis is placed on working with submitting authors to develop their writing and research ability throughout the process.

Today the DMJ stays true to its roots by functioning with much the same goals as it was started with in 1936. Through the introduction of the RIM program at Dalhousie the DMJ hopes to further encourage students to publish their research by providing a venue to submit their work. In coming years we hope to engage more students at Dalhousie in the publication process, to promote physician-student mentoring, and continue to be a voice of the research community here at Dalhousie. We encourage you to consider submitting your research papers and creative writing to the DMJ.

*Joel Bergman
Editor-in-Chief*

References

1. “Hippocratic oath – Dalhousie version” April 2012. < <http://dal.ca.libguides.com/c.php?g=256990&p=1717826#dal> > (04 Nov 2017)
2. Deonandan R, Patel P, Winterbottom R. A student-run peer-reviewed journal: an educational tool for students in the health sciences. *Adv Med Educ Pract* 2012;3:1-5.
3. Alamri, Y. How do medical student journals fare? A global survey of journals run by medical students. *Educ Health* 2016;29(2):136-141.
4. Murray, J. Dalhousie Medical Journal at 75. *DMJ* 2012;38(2):5