

THE STORY OF APICARE

It was in 1999 that I conceived the idea of publishing a newsletter solely dedicated to the specialty of anaesthesiology. In fact it was not altogether a virgin idea. A few years back Maj Gen M. Arshad Hashmi, FRCS, paediatric surgeon, started 'Surgical News' from Rawalpindi, and I had the opportunity to browse through a few issues of it. It was a mix of some papers related to surgery with a few cartoons and jokes. I was completing my postgraduate training at AFIU/CMH Rawalpindi, when I borrowed the idea. If there could be a 'Surgical News', there could well be an 'Anaesthesia News'. Meanwhile, Brig M. Salim was finally awarded his final posting to CMH Rawalpindi as Advisor in Anaesthesiology, for the remaining period of three months of his service. I put the idea to him and as expected, received an immediate reply to go ahead. Necessary formalities to secure an official permission took about three months, and I was ready to set the sails. The first issue bore the title of 'Anaesthesia News', and was brought out in September 1999. It was a replica of 'Surgical News' with chocolate brown cover. As can be expected, it too, contained some cartoons and jokes, besides a few papers. The second issue was also published with the same title, but with a different colour scheme. I chose red colour for the cover, which was to continue in the future. The covers of medical journals are usually of two types. Majority of the journals appear with similar monotonous cover design for all successive issues with or without a logo and no picture. JAMA (Journal of American Medical Association) is different in that each issue of it bears a different picture on it. This idea clicked to me and I chose to bring each issue of 'APIC' with a different picture on it.

But it soon clicked to me that the title of 'Anaesthesia News' did not represent the desired spirit and the scope of a scientific journal, which I intended to transform it into right from the

beginning. So the third issue had its title changed to 'Anaesthesia, Pain & Intensive Care' to make it truly representative of the entire three sister specialties. To fulfill the official obligations, an oblique band with the words 'Anaesthesia News' continued to appear on the upper left hand corner of the title page till 2005, when finally we managed to get rid of it.

APICare, as I often call it, soon started to teach me some tough lessons. As editor of the journal, I came to realize how difficult it was to get some quality papers out of a country of more than one sixty million. Soon the journal, that was intended to be published on quarterly basis, started lagging behind in time schedule, with ultimate decision to restrict it to be a bi-annual one. Even two issues a year proved to be a hard nut to crack.

Although financial matters are equally important, as we have to pay the composing / printing bill to the press, cover computer / courier charges and much more, the continued interaction with pharmaceutical and electro-medical companies made us comfortable in this regard. Some friends even managed to get advertisements for us from non-pharmaceutical companies, as diverse as Pakistan International Airlines and Sitara Chemical Industries. But we were not always that lucky. Unfortunately, all my efforts to have a permanent base and editorial office for the journal at Rawalpindi failed, probably due to heavy commitments of our respected colleagues here. The editorial office had to shift from place to place with me with each posting. So the task of generating enough funds for each new issue had to be started afresh. This aspect has been considerably improved now, after my release from army service. The recent dramatic reduction in telephone call charges has also improved communications and helped us in pursuing the potential sponsors for advertisements. A predicted rise in fund generation

prompted me to launch a second ambitious plan, to publish first APICare calendar for the year 2006-7. The theme of this calendar was 'History of Anaesthesia'. The calendar was published and distributed through out the country. It was in fact a most rewarding experience as evidenced by an overwhelming feedback from our esteemed colleagues. The shortcomings in the design of the calendar were notable. A large amount of material had to be placed in a limited space. Financial constraints and inexperience in this type of work, coupled with lack of expert advice seriously limited the presentation of the calendar, but still it was well received and kept by many of our colleagues as a souvenir. Let us hope for the best in the future. I hope to bring out the next successive calendars under the theme 'History of Anaesthesia in Pakistan', 'History of Pain Management', 'History of Pain Management in Pakistan' and 'History of Intensive Care' etc. Further, the next calendars will be inserted in the issues of the journal. With more regular appearance of the journal will come the desired credibility and respect.

We miserably failed on one front. Regrettably, we could not succeed in getting long due recognition of our journal from Pakistan Medical & Dental Council (PMDC). The reasons of it were beyond our control, and probably best left for the readers to guess. Despite two attempts by Brig. M. Salim the PMDC showed its reluctance to even provisionally register the journal. Hopefully PMDC will have a sympathetic consideration now, as the fresh case for its registration has been taken up. With this

registration, we hope to receive more research papers from our readers to choose from. The journal has been indexed by Medlip and PakMediNet, but these indexing authorities have yet to evolve a mechanism to continuously upload their web sites speedily. We hope to get it indexed by other international indexing services. The future prospectus looks bright, as we have started to expand our scope to involve the community of anaesthesiology, pain management as well as intensive care from across the Asia. We have also included some enthusiastic writers and researchers from abroad in our editorial board. Our special focus will remain on our writers and readers in Middle East, South and Far East Asian countries. The internet has revolutionized the world, and it has now become very easy to access distant authors and scientists through the net. We are already in the process of reaching and communicating health professionals throughout the target countries via e-mail. The coming issues of 'APICare' will contain more and more papers from abroad, received via this channel.

Within the coming months our readers will have access to full length articles of all the previous issues as well as the coming issue on the web. The official web site of the journal has been started and the process of uploading is under way.

Further, we hope to bring three issues a year from the next year. The cooperation and the sincere help from our valuable colleagues has been an asset for us and we request them for their increased involvement to make it happen.

Col Tariq Hayat Khan
Editor