

MJA Christmas Competition

A journey without end

AT THE MJA we are constantly delighted, fascinated and amazed by the submissions we receive. Our Christmas contributions this year did not disappoint: the range of articles reflects the journey through medical life from the fresh-faced idealism of the medical student to the world-weary demeanour of the experienced physician.

For some, the journey involves an attempt to transform the lives of others. Many new doctors set out enthusiastically with a desire to help people and change the world with their new-found knowledge. But as Cheng points out, in her eye-opening account of Medicine along the Mekong (*page 678*), sometimes the world just reaches out and changes us.

Our journey as Australians often takes us to distant lands, like Dr Pat Hodgson who touched a Scottish village and a future doctor with her humour and vitality during World War II, (*Sandeman, page 682*). We are arm-chair travellers too — sports enthusiasts in danger of injury when watching football on the lounge with a beer or two (*Bauman et al, page 684*), but ultimately we give it a go, hoping it will be “orright mate”, even if it involves transporting a seriously ill neonate in an open aircraft, as Anthony Hodgkinson did in the 1950s (*page 683*).

Living in a global society, the onslaught on our daily lives of the cult of celebrity and commercialism is represented by both Ernst and Pittler (*Celebrity-based medicine, page 680*), and psychiatry’s answer to Superman, Garry Walter (*The Directors, page 634*).

As with all travellers’ tales there are stories that make us laugh — sometimes so hard that the cutlery is in danger (*Beldholm and Lee, page 606*) — and those that help us realise that sometimes there is little left to do but accept that we are powerless and finally let go, a theme touched on by both Leeder (*page 636*) and Mohajeri (*page 610*).

But ultimately a decision was made by our intrepid MJA staff and, although every submission received at least one mention, there were two that shone in the judges’ opinion. Bromley and Buckley’s x-tremely interesting research on the x-factor in prescribing of medications in hospital (*page 687*) was a clear winner, along with Mohajeri’s moving poetic description of a patient’s final journey through the eyes of a medical student (*page 610*). These lucky winners will each receive a Christmas hamper with compliments of the MJA.

We would like to thank all our fellow travellers who contributed to the competition this year, and ask that more of you join us on the journey next year. Do send us your ideas for next Christmas — we always want more presents to open!

Tanya Grassi

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