

Hong Kong Journal of Paediatrics

香港兒科醫學雜誌 (New Series)

An Official Publication of
Hong Kong College of Paediatricians &
Hong Kong Paediatric Society
c/o Hong Kong College of Paediatricians, Room 801,
Hong Kong Academy of Medicine Jockey Club
Building, 99 Wong Chuk Hang Road, Aberdeen,
Hong Kong.

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Hong Kong Journal of Paediatrics is
published by Medcom Limited, Room 504-5,
Cheung Tat Centre, 18 Cheung Lee Street,
Chai Wan, Hong Kong.

Tel: (852) 2578 3833, Fax: (852) 2578 3929,

Email: mcl@medcom.com.hk

Indexed in EMBASE/Excerpta Medica, Science
Citation Index Expanded (SCIE) and Scopus

Website: www.hkjpaed.org

ISSN 1013-9923

Editorial

Establish the Foundation of Paediatric Research

In early September, the Hong Kong Paediatric Society (HKPS) held her Annual Scientific Meeting and we noted a very enthusiastic response from our local paediatricians, paediatric nurses and also scientists with special interest on paediatric related researches. There were more than 50 abstracts submitted and they were presented either as oral or poster presentation. The quality of both clinical and laboratory studies were of a high standard and the abstracts can now be viewed from the supplementary section of this journal and also in the HKPS website (<http://www.medicine.org.hk/hkps/>). Around the same time, the Hong Kong College of Paediatricians (HKCP) organised her 1st Research Grant Writing Workshop and again we got a zealous response with more than two dozens of paediatricians attended this series of activities. It is delighting to see that the participants came from different hospitals and clinics including those working in Department of Health. This grant writing workshop aimed to prepare our local paediatricians in applying for the newly established grant known as The Health and Medical Research Fund (HMRF) (<http://www.cityu.edu.hk/ro/diHMRF.htm>). HMRF was established in December 2011 with an injection of HK\$1 billion to support advanced medical research. The aim of HMRF is to build research capacity and to encourage, facilitate and support health and medical research to inform health policies, improve population health, strengthen the health system, enhance healthcare practices, advance standard and quality of care, and promote clinical excellence, through the generation and application of evidence-based scientific knowledge in health and medicine. There are lists of thematic priority and paediatrics is among one of them. In addition, we learned from the Government that the establishment of Children's Hospital at the former Kai Tak Airport site was confirmed and they are currently finalising the architectural design with different stake holders. We learned that there will be space allocated for a Research Institute. Therefore, the opportunity in enhancing the advancement of paediatric and child health through good quality research in our own soil has never been as encouraging as now.

When the soil is ready, how about the seeds? In the past, local paediatric research has been heavily depending on the paediatric departments of the two local Universities. However, that should not be the case, all paediatricians or paediatric trainee with the ambition in improving the paediatric management or care should participate in this endeavour. Part of the reason previously was due to the restriction of research funding mainly confined to the Research Universities. Staff working outside the academic environment has very little resources to support them in performing good quality research. Now the HMRF is opened to applications for staff working under the Hospital Authority and Department of

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The editors like to acknowledge with gratitude the major contributions of the reviewers who have rendered their valuable service in reviewing the articles submitted to our Journal in 2013.

Health as well and therefore it helps to remove the barrier for colleagues working outside the academic institutions. We should guide our colleagues in different domains to participate and the HKPS, HKCP, two Universities and the Hong Kong Journal of Paediatrics (HKJP) should facilitate such a development.

Some of the juniors expressed their difficulties and claimed that they do not have sophisticated laboratory to support their research. In fact this is a misconception, if we look at the original articles of this issue of HKJP, many of the good studies do not require advanced technology to support. The most important aspect is to identify the problems through daily practice and try to solve them with a proper approach. The proper approach means logical study design, feasible sample selection, stringent data collection, unbiased interpretation and precise description of the results. That is how the workshop of HKCP is currently trying to help and facilitate.

Dating back to my junior years, the most difficult thing in performing research was to motivate oneself to start. I have to overcome the resistance from inertia and also the fatigue from heavy clinical duties. Then I have to face repeated failures and frustrations in the early phase. I have to learn from my mistakes and kept going on. Only through constant practice and continuous learning, then one can acquire the necessary research skill. While the process may be difficult in the beginning, if one can move on with perseverance, then the final outcome will be gratifying and rewarding. And I believe, only through good quality research, we can improve the paediatric clinical service and care. I wish that someday a significant part of the paediatric advances globally will be contributed by our colleagues. We will establish our guidelines through evidence based data derived from ourselves. With the right atmosphere and support available currently, we should nurture our next generations of local paediatricians so they can actively engage in paediatric research and play a significant role in the future development of paediatrics and child health.

GCF CHAN
Chief Editor