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Editorial

Neonatology

The theme of this issue of our Journal is Neonatology. This specialty is well established in Hong Kong and the neonatal service in the public sector is principally provided by the regional Hospital Authority hospitals distributed throughout the territory. In the last two decades, there have been noticeable advances in Neonatology with regard to new modalities of treatment, for example, nitric oxide, new modes of mechanical ventilation, body cooling, etc. More recently, research in Neonatology has been directed towards exploring the aetiology of diseases and mechanisms of action in the fields of genetic, molecular and protein biology.

The two James Hutchison Memorial Lecture special articles, indeed, focus on the pathogenesis and inflammatory processes associated with bronchopulmonary dysplasia, and 'nutritional programming' in newborns. Both articles provide the 'State of the Art' knowledge on the development of lung diseases and long-term outcomes of early postnatal nutrition. This issue also presents a number of review articles on important neonatal topics, including the pathogenesis and management of osteopenia, current trends in minimal access surgery, effects of endotoxin on the newborn brain, practical management on sacral dimples, local data on outcomes in extremely low birth weight infants, and local experience on the use of bubble continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) ventilation. Further, the case reports are also educational and informative. The contents of this issue, thus, cover a wide range of critical neonatal topics which are of interest to neonatologists as well as general paediatricians.

The neonatal research in Hong Kong has long been recognised as being among the best in the international scientific arena. Most of the research, to date, are clinical trials. With rapid advances in basic science research, the challenge in future will be to collate such findings with clinical data and transform the results into clinical practice, thereby enhancing the understanding of the pathogenesis of neonatal diseases and improving the quality of treatment.

PC NG and W Wong
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