EDITORS' MESSAGE

We are pleased to present the first issue of the Dalhousie Medical Journal for 2009. The journal continues to receive an eclectic mix of submissions. We look forward to increasing our submission numbers and expanding the scope of our readership in the upcoming year.

In keeping with our usual format, this issue is composed of a mix of science and humanities pieces. Our research section opens with a retrospective analysis of the incidence of diagnostic peritoneal lavage (DPL) utilization in the setting of abdominal trauma at Nova Scotia's sole tertiary trauma centre. DPL is taught as part of the Advanced Trauma Life Support course offered by the American College of Surgery. However, the study included here shows that DPL has become seldom used during Nova Scotia trauma cases and raises the question of whether current volume allows for adequate skills maintenance. We are also pleased to present a timely article written by two third year medical students that explores the role of the news media in communicating medical advances to the public and offers commentary with respect to how researchers and journalists can better work together to facilitate this interaction.

Humanities content for this issue begins with cover art that was provided by third year medical student Brett Vair. She originally composed the piece for *Sensation*, a Dalhousie Medical School art show exploring the theme of sensory loss. Brett provided a caption for the piece that is included below. We also feature a history article written by first year medical student Glen Patriquin, which explores a facet of 'obsolete' infectious disease history, and suggests students and physicians should be aware of treatments of the past to best manage problems of the present and future. Finally, we present an interesting short story written by second year medical student Heather Thompson, which both showcases her writing talent and explores how a young patient might deal with a terrible injury.

We have sincerely enjoyed taking part in reviewing submissions and compiling this issue. It is our hope that the journal continues to both encourage student research and writing, and offer an interesting read for health professionals of the Dalhousie community and beyond.

Stephen Smith¹ and Shane Journeay²
¹Sr. Editor-in-Chief, DMJ
²Jr. Editor-in-Chief, DMJ

Cover art by Brett Vair **Untitled**

"Much of human communication is conveyed through facial expression rather than through words — through subtleties, like the creases that appear in the skin around a person's eyes when they are smiling, or the wrinkles that appear in one's forehead during moments of surprise.

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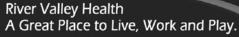
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