
Editorial: Medicine For The 21st Century And Beyond

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Abstract

“That it will ever come into general use, notwithstanding its value, is extremely doubtful; because its beneficial application requires much time and gives a good bit of trouble both to the patient and the practitioner; because its hue and character are foreign and opposed to all our habits and associations” London Times 1834

Whilst this quotation actually concerns the introduction of the stethoscope, the same could be said of many of the latest tools being used in clinical practice. Computers and other devices in all shapes and sizes are being increasingly used as diagnostic adjuncts, reference libraries, medical calculators, patient trackers, drug formularies, research tools and for database modelling. The list is endless.

Many technologies are even being taken for granted; it is difficult to imagine evidence based medicine being feasible without the resources of the internet or having communication as quick, simple and reliable as e-mail.

Medical informatics is a rapidly expanding sub-specialty that has captured the hearts and minds of many a physician. The integration of the newest emergent technologies with traditional medical disciplines stemming from Hippocratic origins is truly a wonder to behold. I say sub-specialty

because informatics has permeated through all fields in medicine and surgery. It is a vital part of the current practice of medicine and will be essential in years to come.

The scope for study, debate and conjecture is never-ending and the purpose of this journal is to address the need for the further studying of informatics. What sets this journal apart is the unique editorial approach we will be taking. We have three editors from the fields of clinical medicine, management and computer sciences respectively. The most successful informatics projects seamlessly weave these disciplines together and this is to be reflected in our journal. In this issue, there are reviews of the use of wearable and handheld computing technologies in medical practice. We also have an original article studying the use of web surveys and physician response rates.

Medical informatics is the key to the future of the practice of medicine. It is medicine for the 21st Century and beyond. I hope you will join us on the journey

Dr Andrew Choong
Editor-in-Chief

References

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