Farewell Dr Marcovitch

On behalf of the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health, BMJ Publishing Group, and the Editorial Board and staff of *ADC*, I would like to express our tremendous thanks to Harvey Marcovitch as he retires as editor. Harvey became co-editor of *ADC* in 1994 and sole editor in 2000. With a sure touch and keen mind he has implemented many major changes, including a new reader friendly format for electronic submission and reviewing (Bench>Press), excellent writers who provide occasional light relief, and the promotion of first class young associate editors. The last decade has been a tumultuous time for peer reviewed publications, and many of the changes Harvey has championed, some obvious, some unseen, have made *ADC* more relevant for clinicians while maintaining its leadership position as a scientific journal.

From a personal standpoint I am also thankful for Harvey’s guidance. With characteristic kindness, wisdom, and wit, he has offered advice when needed, but always with a light hand. I am delighted that he will still be close by, spending more time with the BMJ Publishing Group, and editing a new column in *ADC* written by parents and patients about their experiences with physicians while maintaining its leadership position as a scientific journal.

The challenge of child protection

The hygiene hypothesis—that the lack of early exposure to naturally occurring infections leads to later sensitisation—has been percolating for about a decade. Njå and colleagues extend some of their earlier findings, suggesting that the impact on later sensitisation depends not only on the type of early exposure but also whether parents have a history of atopy. I remain a bit mystified by the collective literature on the hygiene hypothesis, it seems a bit inconsistent and messy.

JWPAM

It has become virtually impossible to read the scores of peer reviewed journals focused on child health. Numerous “abstracting publications” have been developed. Debuting in this month’s *ADC* is selected abstracts from Journal Watch Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine. Published by the Massachusetts Medical Society, this publication contains synopsis of articles drawn from over 30 peer reviewed publications. I will be selecting 3—6 abstracts from JWPAM each month to appear in *ADC*.

WILL YOU MEET THE QUEEN?

On a personal note I want to express my thanks to both the Royal College and the BMJ Publishing Group. I come to you from the editorial board where I have been writing Transatlantic Topics for the past three years. I am associated with Boston University School of Medicine and Boston Medical Center (formerly Boston City Hospital). BCH has a very long history, at least by US standards, of caring for underserved populations. The majority of the children we serve are impoverished, most are minority, and many are newly arrived immigrants. My postgraduate training is in statistics and epidemiology. I lead a group of physicians and other professionals who conduct clinical, health services, and policy research. For the past 10 years my own work has focused on clinical trials, health promotion, issues that impact on inappropriate use of oral antibiotics, and parent involvement in the care of their children. More recently, I have tried to understand how peer reviewed publications need to evolve in order to meet the needs of physicians.

On learning of my appointment my children had three questions—will I meet the Queen (not likely); am I famous yet (no); and when is their next trip to London (soon)—the humming comments of children.

In closing, I am committed to ensuring that *ADC* treats its reviewers and contributors fairly, is responsive to the clinical, scientific, and educational needs of College members, and most importantly, helps to improve the health and well-being of children both in the UK as well as around the world. I look forward to the challenges ahead.

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