

# Atoms

Howard Bauchner, *Editor in Chief*

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY ADC

This year is our birthday—*ADC* is 80 years old. As Bernard Valman writes in his piece “Revelations of an insider: *ADC* 1926–2006” *ADC* was launched by the British Medical Association as its first house specialist journal in 1926. He explores the history of the journal, particularly since 1982 when he was appointed co-editor with Professor Roy Meadow. He comments on important issues, including changing technology, finances, content, and achievements and challenges. He adds a wonderful list of articles, drawn from our archives that reflect important contributions to the medical literature over eight decades.

What of the future? A few years back we wondered if most medical journals would survive—although I suspect that some may become entirely electronic or become extinct, based upon virtually every indicator, *ADC* is thriving. Circulation, submissions, impact factor and downloads from the Internet have increased. In addition, journals that are the official representative of a professional group are more “protected” from the vagaries of market forces. Open access—making journals free to everyone—was a “hot” issue for a number of years, but seems to have quieted down. Making information available free to people living in the poorest countries, and to everyone after 6–12 months appears to be acceptable, at least at the moment. The survival of print journals, or least the print portion of a journal, appears to be safe for now. To paraphrase Mark Twain, the reported death of print journals was premature and greatly exaggerated. Our numerous readership surveys indicate that most of our subscribers like receiving both an electronic version and print copy of *ADC*. However, this may change as technology and reading habits evolve. At a recent meeting a young member of the College asked if we could make the entire content of *ADC* available for handheld devices. In the immediate future we anticipate a redesign of our

cover, as BMJ Publishing hopes for more and more branding of its products, *Education & Practice* expands to six issues per year, the growing success of BMJ Master Classes in Paediatrics, and most importantly the continuing publication of high quality research papers, coupled with comment and review. The distant future is far more difficult to predict, but I do hope that *ADC* can play a larger role in Europe, reflecting the organisation and licensure of physicians within the European Union, and I can envision a family of *ADC* publications, rather than just *ADC*, *Fetal & Neonatal*, and *Education & Practice*. Issues that focus on global health, health and politics, child development, and infectious diseases are within our reach.

## THE MYSTERIES OF COELIAC DISEASE

I have been fascinated by the recent information about coeliac disease. Once thought to be a rare disease, it is now estimated that one in every 100 children may have the disorder. Because of the recognition that coeliac disease may be an important “emerging disease” the National Institutes of Health released a white paper in 2004 entitled *NIH Consensus Development Conference on Celiac Disease* (<http://consensus.nih.gov/2004/2004CeliacDisease118html.htm>, last accessed 26 September 2006). It is an excellent read and suggests that we know very little about children and adults who are serologically positive, but have no clinical manifestations of disease. In this issue of *ADC*, in a nicely done case series, Ravikumara and colleagues from Cardiff describe their experience with 86 patients diagnosed over 21 years. Mark Beattie adds an important perspective.

See pages 955 and 969

## 2006 – A DIFFICULT YEAR FOR THE WORLD, A BETTER YEAR FOR MANY CHILDREN

The ongoing conflict in Iraq leads the headlines around the world, and certainly in the UK and US. The enormously frustrating war appears never ending, with wider and wider political and social implications. Accompanying the war is death and destruction for the citizens of Iraq—not surprisingly, children are its most painful victims.

On a more positive note, is the remarkable gift of Warren Buffett to the Gates Foundation. Rather than leaving his fortune of about £20 billion to his own foundation, he will gift about £1 billion per year to the Gates Foundation for immediate disbursement. This latter point is critical—he has insisted that his yearly gift not be added to the endowment of the foundation, but rather distributed through the foundation to its various causes. It is estimated that 60–70% of Gates’ dollars support global health initiatives. The potential to benefit infants and children is enormous. Immunisations remain the single most effective medical intervention that reduce child mortality and the Gates foundation has supported the purchase and distribution of existing vaccines, as well as the development of new vaccines and novel delivery systems. Worldwide vaccination with currently available immunisations (including against rotavirus) would save over five million lives annually. In addition, there appears to be growing international support to ensure that therapy for HIV disease is available for all affected individuals. This may help reduce the dramatic increase in the number of orphans living around the world. Perhaps the lives of families will improve in this century.

## SEASONS GREETINGS

As always I wish you, your family and friends seasons greetings and health and well being.