

# South African Medical Journal

## Suid-Afrikaanse Tydskrif vir Geneeskunde

### VAN DIE REDAKSIE

#### MEDIËSE TYDSKRIFTE

Die mediese literatuur is so oud, en ouer, as Hippokrates. Voor die nuusblad vir die eerste keer gedurende die 17de eeu sy verskyning in Europa gemaak het, is mediese geskrifte, net soos ander wetenskaplike werke, in die vorm van aparte verhandelinge of essays gepubliseer: Harvey se *De motu cordis* van 1628 is 'n voorbeeld. Die vroeë mediese tydskrifte was bloot aanpassings van die nuusblaadjies van hul tyd.<sup>1</sup>

Die eerste gereëlde soort wetenskaplike tydskrif was die vervolgpublikasie van die verrigtinge of *acta* van die wetenskaplike verenigings wat gedurende die 17de eeu in verskeie Europese lande gestig is—in 1603 te Rome, 1635 te Parys, in 1660 te Londen, ens. So ook is mediese navorsing sedert die tweede helfte van die 17de eeu in die *Royal Society of London* se *Philosophical Transactions* gepubliseer. Gedurende die 18de eeu is verenigings van suiwer geneeskundige aard tot stand gebring, en hulle verrigtinge was 'n belangrike mylpaal in die ontwikkeling van die mediese joernalistiek. Vroeë voorbeelde op Engels was die *Medical Essays and Observations* (1733-44) wat deur 'n vereniging in Edinburg uitgegee was; die *Medical Transactions* (1768-1820) van die *Royal College of Physicians of London*, en sedert 1793, die *Transactions of the Philadelphia College of Physicians*—gepubliseerde verhandelinge gerig aan die *Massachusetts Medical Society* dateer vanaf 1719. 'n Groot aantal verrigtinge en *acta* op alle mediese gebiede word vandag nog in verskeie tale gepubliseer, en baie van hulle is nouliks te onderskei van die gewone geneeskundige tydskrif. Gelykstaande aan die verrigtinge van verenigings is die gewoonlik jaarlikse verslae van hospitale, publieke mediese beamptes ens., waarvan die *True report of the great costs and changes of the five hospitals in the City of London*, 1645-56<sup>1</sup> die vroegste Engelse voorloper was.

Algemene geneeskundige tydskrifte het gedurende en veral teen die einde van die 18de eeu in verskillende lande begin. Op Engels is sulke tydskrifte byvoorbeeld in 1779 en 1791 in Londen gestig, in 1796 in Edinburg,

### EDITORIAL

#### JOURNALS OF MEDICINE

Medical literature has been written since the days of Hippocrates and earlier. Before the news-sheet first appeared in Europe in the 17th century medical writings, like other scientific works, were published in the form of separate treatises or essays (e.g. Harvey's *De motu cordis* of 1628). The earlier medical periodicals were merely adaptations of the contemporary news-sheet.<sup>1</sup>

The first type of regular scientific periodical was the serial publication of the transactions or *acta* of the scientific societies which were formed in the different countries of Europe during the 17th century (Rome 1603, Paris 1635, London 1660, etc.). Thus, from the late 17th century medical researches were reported in the *Philosophical Transactions* of the Royal Society of London. Strictly medical societies were formed during the 18th century and their transactions mark an important stage in the development of journals of medicine. Early examples in the English language are the *Medical Essays and Observations* (1733-44) issued by a society in Edinburgh, the *Medical Transactions* (1768-1820) of the Royal College of Physicians of London, and the *Transactions of the Philadelphia College of Physicians* from 1793 onwards (published papers communicated to the Massachusetts Medical Society date back to 1719). A great number of transactions and *acta* in all branches of medicine are still published in many languages, many of them indistinguishable from the ordinary general medical journal. Parallel with the transactions of societies are the reports (usually annual) of hospitals, public medical officers, etc., of which the earliest English forerunner was the 'True report of the great costs and changes of the five hospitals in the City of London, 1645-56.'<sup>1</sup>

The general medical journals grew up in different countries during the 18th century, mainly towards its close. In English such journals were, for example, started in London in 1779 and 1791, in Edinburgh in 1796, and after the turn of the century in Ireland and America. 'These attained their full growth with such famous

en aan die begin van die volgende eeu in Ierland en Amerika. 'Hierdie (tydskrifte) het tot volle wasdom gekom met beroemde name soos *The Lancet* (1823)—die oudste Engelse mediese Tydskrif wat tot vandag nog ononderbroke uitgegee word.' Op die hakke van *The Lancet* volg die *Glasgow Medical Journal* (1828), wat ook nog in omloop is. Die *Dublin Medical Press*\* wat in 1839 gestig is, het in 1860 saamgesmelt met die *Medical Circular* ('n Londense tydskrif gestig in 1852), en het tot vandag bly voortbestaan as die *Medical Press and Circular* van Londen.<sup>2</sup>

Die lys van algemene mediese tydskrifte is veral sedert die einde van die 19de eeu vermenigvuldig deur die gedurige verskyning van nuwe spesialiteit-tydskrifte. Vandag word die meeste mediese tydskrifte, met Engels as voertaal, in die VSA gepubliseer. Sommige van die Amerikaanse tydskrifte op algemene geneeskunde is vroeg in die 19de eeu gebore; onder dié wat nog altyd in omloop is, is die *New England Journal of Medicine* (Boston, 1812), en die *American Journal of Medical Sciences* (Philadelphia, 1827).

Die *British Medical Journal* is in 1857 gestig—34 jaar na *The Lancet* en 11 jaar voor die *Practitioner*. Die *Journal of the American Medical Association* het 26 jaar later, in 1883, begin. Hoewel hierdie twee tydskrifte die mondstukke van nasionale mediese verenigings is, behoort hulle nogtans by die klas van algemene mediese blaaië.<sup>1</sup>

In ander dele van die wêreld is mediese blaaië met Engels as voertaal eers later gestig, hoewel die *Australian Medical Journal* wat later met die *Medical Journal of Australia* saamgesmelt het, al in 1856 gestig is. Dit is interessant om daarop te let dat die Engelse taal vandag baie in geneeskundige tydskrifte in sekere dele van die Europese Vasteland, byvoorbeeld in die Skandinawiese lande, gebruik word.

Die eerste bekende onderneming in die mediese joernalistiek in Suid-Afrika was die kortstondige *Cape Town Medical Gazette*,<sup>3</sup> wat in 1847 as 'n kwartaalblad begin is. Dit was onder die redaksie van dr. H. A. Ebdon, wat 2 jaar tevore van Skotland gekom het en later plaaslik goed bekend geword het. Hy was voorsitter van die 'Supreme Medical Committee' van die Kolonie. Dr. F. le S. Fleck, dr. L. Pappe en dr. H. Bickersteth was drie van die gereëde bydraers. Die interessantste artikels in hierdie tydskrif is twee kommentare van die Redaksie op die gebruik in 1847 in Kaapstad van swael-eter as verdowingsmiddel. Hierdie tydskrif het 'n in kortstondige lewe gehad, en 'n tydperk van amper 40 jaar het daarna verstryk voordat daar enige verdere ontwikkeling in die mediese joernalistiek in Suid-Afrika plaasgevind het.

1. Lefanu, W. R. (1938): *British Periodicals of Medicine*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press.
2. Rowlette, R. J. (1939): *The Medical Press and Circular 1839-1939*. Londen: Medical Press and Circular.
3. Burrows, E. H. (1954): *S. Afr. T. Geneesk.*, **28**, 528.

\* Die stigter en eerste redakteur van die *Dublin Medical Press* was dr. Arthur Jacob, wat as redakteur opgevolg is deur sy seun, dr. A. Hamilton Jacob. Hulle was die oorgrootvader en grootvader van dr. H. Hamilton Jacob, wat nou in Kaapstad praktiseer.

names as *The Lancet* (1823)—the oldest English medical journal still running in unbroken series', which was closely followed by the *Glasgow Medical Journal* (1828), also still running.<sup>1</sup> The Dublin Medical Press,\* which was founded in 1839, joined up in 1860 with the *Medical Circular*, a London journal founded in 1852, to carry on as the *Medical Press and Circular*, which is still published in London.<sup>2</sup>

The list of general medical journals has been multiplied by the constant production of new specialist journals, more since the close of the 19th century. The majority of medical journals in the English language today are published in the USA. Some of the American general medical journals started early in the 19th century; amongst those still in publication are the *New England Journal of Medicine* (Boston, 1812) and the *American Journal of Medical Sciences* (Philadelphia, 1827).

The *British Medical Journal* was established in 1857 (34 years after the *Lancet* and 11 years before the *Practitioner*) and the *Journal of the American Medical Association* began 26 years later, in 1883. These two journals, though organs of national medical associations, belong in fact to the class of general medical journals.<sup>1</sup>

Medical journals in English in other parts of the world grew up later, though the *Australian Medical Journal*, now merged in the *Medical Journal of Australia*, began as early as 1856. It is interesting to note that English is used a good deal today in medical publications in certain countries of the Continent of Europe, e.g. the Scandinavian countries.

The earliest known venture in medical journalism in South Africa was the short-lived *Cape Town Medical Gazette*,<sup>3</sup> which was issued as a quarterly in 1847. It was edited by Dr. H. A. Ebdon, who had come from Scotland 2 years earlier and afterwards became well known locally and was chairman of the 'Supreme Medical Committee' of the Colony. Three regular contributors were Dr. F. le S. Fleck, Dr. L. Pappe and Dr. H. Bickersteth. The most interesting articles in this journal are two editorial commentaries upon the earliest use of sulphuric ether as an anaesthetic in Cape Town in 1847.<sup>3</sup> This journal ran for a short time only, after which a period of nearly 40 years elapsed before any further development of medical journalism took place in South Africa.

1. Lefanu, W. R. (1938): *British Periodicals of Medicine*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press.
2. Rowlette, R. J. (1939): *The Medical Press and Circular 1839-1939*. London: Medical Press and Circular.
3. Burrows, E. H. (1954): *S. Afr. Med. J.*, **28**, 528.

\* The founder and first editor of the *Dublin Medical Press* was Dr. Arthur Jacob, who was succeeded as editor by his son Dr. A. Hamilton Jacob. These were the great-grandfather and grandfather of Dr. H. Hamilton Jacob, now a Cape Town physician.