

The next ten years

“As the *European Journal of Palliative Care (EJPC)* embarks on its tenth year of publication, I would like to reflect on the past nine years and look forward to the next ten volumes. The *raison d'être* for the *EJPC* was articulated by our first editor-in-chief, Geoffrey Hanks, in 1994. The *EAPC* had grown rapidly since its foundation in 1988 and the *EJPC* was, therefore, to be the ‘authoritative voice for the Association in the form of an official journal’. The core of the journal was to commission review articles, covering all aspects of palliative care, as well as become a multidisciplinary source of up-to-date knowledge, news and other relevant information.¹

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We have striven to carry items that reflect all shades of opinion from as many countries and professions as we can. We have sought to present the journal in as attractive and accessible a format as possible. We hope that the result has been interesting, stimulating and informative.

There have been various new developments during the lifetime of the *EJPC*: the *EAPC* is now the largest single voice for palliative care in the world. It has hosted seven highly successful congresses in as many different countries of Europe, with the 8th congress in The Hague this April being eagerly anticipated. There have been two equally successful research meetings in Berlin and Lyon. The various networks and task forces have produced crucial work, consensus statements and documents. All of these have been covered by the journal.

During the last nine years, palliative care has expanded and developed extremely rapidly in Europe, but nowhere more so than in Eastern Europe. We have sought to reflect this evolution by publishing articles from different countries that reflect the struggles and triumphs of these years. Recently, we have carried a series of articles by Wright and Clark on ‘beacon institutions’ in Eastern Europe.² This issue features the third of this series and concerns Poznan in Western Poland. These articles are derived from the much larger project of surveying the hospice and palliative care developments occurring in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. The project has been funded as part of a large Network Public

Health Program by the Open Society Institute. The recently published book, *Transitions in End of Life Care*, makes fascinating reading, not only for social and medical historians but also for practising palliative carers (‘palliateurs’ as the authors call them).³

Development of palliative care in France may sometimes be hidden from English-speaking palliateurs, not least by the tradition of separate language publication. Filbet’s article in this issue describes what can be achieved with a successful partnership between politicians, policy makers and palliative care teams.

A palliative care challenge that some of us in the UK have already had to face is that of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (CJD). Although the absolute number of patients so far has been mercifully small, there is the potential for a large epidemic in future years. This may be limited geographically, although there are fears that the rest of Europe may be affected too. There are, therefore, two reviews of different aspects of palliative care for people with CJD by Weller *et al* and by de Vries. One hopes that new disease control strategies will be developed in the next few years that will limit such an increased incidence. Certainly, this has happened so far with HIV and AIDS.

What other developments will there be in the next ten years? I have become aware, perhaps belatedly, that in most European countries, chronic pain not related to cancer is at least as much of a problem as cancer pain, yet it has received much less attention, funding and resources. In the UK, the Royal College of General Practitioners has just convened a small working group, with the aim of supporting the improvement of persistent pain management in the community. It is felt to be most important to raise the profile of such problems on the government agenda. What part do palliateurs have to play in such a project? That remains to be seen. ”

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References

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