

A VISION

The evolution of the Academy since its formation in 2004 has been exciting and challenging. Just as I expected! As Chairman of the Academy Executive Board (AEB) I have a role as liaison person with the International Federation of Manual/Musculoskeletal Medicine (FIMM) - from the Scientific Committee of which the Academy emerged. For this reason, I have served as a member of the FIMM Executive Board since 2004, and will continue to do so until the next FIMM General Assembly (probably September 2008).

The AEB is not only responsible for liaison, administration and logistics, it also has other roles. I will identify two of these additional roles in some detail as they illustrate an important principle upon which the Academy was founded and also exemplify the determination of the Academy to focus on the nature of individual (member) interactions and the need for dissemination of information.

PROVISION OF A SUITABLE MILIEU FOR THE WORK OF THE SCIENCE BOARD AND THE ACADEMY MEMBERS

As all clinicians will recognise, EBM (evidence-based medicine) has become a necessary part of medical practice, driven by national health services and health insurers, over the last 20 years. As a consequence, evidence – for reliability and validity of diagnostic tests and treatment strategies in particular – has been an important facet of our daily professional lives ... and indeed has been the *raison d'être* for the work of the Academy and similar organisations in other disciplines. Progress, for instance the establishment of a subspecialty in Manual/Musculoskeletal Medicine or the future acknowledgement by WHO or UEMS (Union of European Medical Specialties) of Manual Medicine as a valid mainstream medical discipline, is unthinkable without the benefit of a sound evidence base.

Manual/Musculoskeletal Medicine (M/MM) is an extraordinary medical discipline – inasmuch as it is an eclectic mix of diverse “schools”, most of which have been associated with national societies or subgroups whose enthusiasm for their own “guru” became the driving force for their development. Rather than mention the leaders of these 20th century schools by name (which would inevitably lead to discontent in some ranks if I miss one or two) I would remind activists that the role of physicians in manual medicine has gradually become recognised throughout healthcare in general over centuries (and perhaps millennia in some countries), but with seemingly an exponential acceleration in recent decades.

However, there is a downside to eclecticism. The protectionist and sectarian attitudes that persist (on occasions) in some national societies of M/MM, with particular respect to the perceived need or desire to maintain or advance the reputation of their “school” or their place in international affairs, may lead to political gesturing and ultimate targets that are unwelcome in the field of Science and its implementation through teaching. As a

consequence, the Academy Executive has a challenging and important role in attempting to provide a forum or platform that is as free from political dimensions as possible for the work of the Academy members. The Academy has NO political ambition, and internal sectarianism is deplored. I quote Goethe: ***“Science and Art belong to the whole world, and the barriers of nationality vanish before them”***.

“INTERNATIONAL MUSCULOSKELETAL MEDICINE” JOURNAL

The Academy Executive has recognised for a long time, indeed for many years prior to the ratification by FIMM of the Articles of Association of the Academy in 2004, that an important tool for transmission of scientific information should be an international journal of repute and excellence. Hence, the exploration over recent years by the International Journal Committee (whose responsibility is to both the Academy Executive and the Science Board) of the most appropriate method of development of a journal in the English language that would have style, interest, high impact factor and the capacity for rated status.

The outcome of these deliberations was to engage in discussion the owners of the JOM (Journal of Orthopaedic Medicine) – the SOM (Society of Orthopaedic Medicine) and BIMM (British Institute of Musculoskeletal Medicine) – through the office of the Journal Chief Editor, Richard Ellis and the publishing group Maney. An agreement has been reached that is satisfactory to all parties (SOM, BIMM, Maney and the Academy):

Maney will be responsible for all aspects of publishing, including:

- Postage of all printed issues
- Provision of online access
- 16 pages of colour in each issue
- Marketing & promotion
- Provision of Editorial Manager online submission & refereeing system for the Journal, comprising:
 - Set-up of the Journal website
 - Website maintenance
 - Training for editors
 - Ongoing technical support
- Subscriptions management
- Financial management
- Copy-editing
- Typesetting & Printing
- Distribution, including marketing & online publishing

The obligations of the **Academy**:

- Adoption of the Journal as its ***official journal***
- Routing of papers from Academy conferences & working groups, & individual research to the Journal

- Substantive (international) editorial contribution
- Guarantee of subscription payment for 60 members
- Publicity and acknowledgement given to the association with Maney

The benefits to the **SOM and BIMM**:

- SOM & BIMM retain copyright & ownership of the Journal
- Editorial control held by editorial team

Benefits to the **FIMM**:

- National societies will be able to select articles for publication in their own journals
- Reduced subscription for members of FIMM national societies
- Journals of national societies and journals in other languages would continue as they are now ... if they wish
- Editorial collaboration ... “esprit de corps”

Benefits to the **Academy**:

- Preferential subscription rate
- 2008 - £12 (3 issues)
- 2009 - £16 (4 issues)
- Printed copies as well as online access

The projected outcome:

- 3 issues pa in 2008
- 4 issues pa from 2009
- Increased frequency of publication (compared with the JOM), helped by but not dependent upon increased number of papers from Academy members
- Progress towards good impact factor and rated status

The title of the new journal (1st edition early 2008):

INTERNATIONAL MUSCULOSKELETAL MEDICINE

“Including Manual Medicine and Manual therapy”

THE FUTURE

I believe that the future of the Academy is assured because of the recognition by the Executive Board of the need for the continued evaluation and re-evaluation of the evidence base by the membership, combined with a close relationship between scientists

and educationalists/teachers. We will always have the welfare of the members (and therefore the welfare of M/MM clinicians in general and their patients) at heart – by helping to provide the very best platform for scientific work and its implementation, and the very best means of dissemination of the members' deliberations.

Michael Hutson
Chairman of the Academy Executive Board