

It takes a village...

An important purpose of journals like this one is to be a focal point for discussions among an engaged intellectual community. Publishers, editors, editorial advisory board members, authors, reviewers and readers all contribute by identifying topics of importance, presenting noteworthy information on those topics that can advance theory and inform practice, and responding with additional observations. Sometimes this discussion confirms beliefs or the value of promising innovations, sometimes it reveals previously unrecognised limits to interpretation or application and sometimes it disproves widely held positions causing us to all change our thinking. Examination and re-examination is important, because just as different contexts can lead to different conclusions (Abramson and Abramson, 2001), so can different analytic approaches (Silberzahn *et al.*, 2018).

Our editors contribute to the quality of this dialogue in two ways. First, every year journal's editors attend regional, national and international conferences where we interact with the authors of interesting work. We look for opportunities to bring the best of that work to the attention of our readers by encouraging those authors to consider publishing with us. Emerald Group Publishing itself also provides supportive guidance and award recognition for graduate student research (www.emeraldgrouppublishing.com/research/index.htm) and writers at all levels of experience (www.emeraldgrouppublishing.com/authors/index.htm). Second, we oversee journal's peer review of submitted manuscripts, a process that helps authors refine the quality of their work and relies upon the generous time contribution of subject matter experts among our international readership.

We provide below highlights of conferences attended in 2018. Since there are far more conferences each year than our editorial team can attend, we need to be strategic in planning. We rely upon the advice of our editorial advisory board as well as readers. If you know of other conferences pertinent to health care policy and governance that we should consider, please let us know.

Through collaboration with the Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research (www.msfr.org), the UK's Fuse Centre for Translational Research in Public Health held its biennial conference in Vancouver, British Columbia, last May. Cohosted by Fuse, MSFHR, the British Columbia Ministry of Health and the Public Health Association of British Columbia, this is the first time it has been held in North America. By design a small meeting to promote dialogue and networking, this conference drew 180 attendees from nine countries. Attendees spanned the entire spectrum of research knowledge producers, knowledge users and consumers, networking facilitators, capacity builders, politicians and policy authors, and included persons from government agency and health region leadership; faculty and graduate students of many universities; managers and directors of foundations and non-governmental institutes; and analysts, communication specialists and patient representatives. Conversations were stimulated by four workshops, an insightful range of speakers during 12 oral sessions, and authors of 17 posters. For information about date and location of the 2020 FUSE conference, keep an eye on www.fuse.ac.uk/.

The Annual Scientific meeting of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons was attended by Allan Spigelman, our Regional Editor – Australia, in Sydney last May. He chaired a session outlining the impact on health care of detailed genomic analysis of cancer patients and the general population. Studies were presented outlining how treatment strategies were altered as a result of testing – so called “precision medicine”.



The annual 10th Croatian Cochrane Symposium was held in Split, Croatia in June 2018 and attended by our Regional Editor – Europe. Cochrane Croatia (<http://croatia.cochrane.org/>) promotes evidence-based decision making in health care in Croatia and the region by supporting and training new authors of Cochrane reviews, as well as working with clinicians, professional associations, policy makers, patients' organisations and the media to encourage the dissemination and use of Cochrane evidence. The topic of this year symposium "Building capacity for *Cochrane Systematic Review* production and dissemination" drew a varied crowd of participants, from journal editors and health professionals to students and representatives of patient/consumer organisations. The key speakers were Professor Taryn Young (Director, Centre for Evidence-based Healthcare, Chief Specialist Scientist, Cochrane South Africa and Head, Division of Epidemiology and Biostatistics at Stellenbosch University, South Africa); Dr Tamara Lotfi (Secretariat Coordinator for the Global Evidence Synthesis Initiative) and Selena Ryan-Vig (Communications Coordinator at Students for Best Evidence, Cochrane UK). Co-directors of Cochrane Croatia (Dr Irena Zakarija-Grkovic and Dr Tina Poklepovic Pericic) presented the impressive results of its first ten years of work, including the translation by volunteers into Croatian of more than 2,500 Plain Language Summaries of Cochrane reviews, and of 46 Cochrane podcasts. The afternoon was reserved for practical workshops and roundtables providing an opportunity for capacity building and dissemination strategies to be developed, as well as for participants to gain first-hand experience in producing evidence maps and using the Spark tool for the prioritisation of systematic review topics.

"Community Health Conference 2018 – A Commitment to a Healthy Community" was attended by our Regional Editor – Asia. Hong Kong has outrun Japan and become the city with the longest life expectancy. The inevitable physical deterioration of the aging body will impact the individual, the caregiver and the society as a whole. The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region has committed to strengthen the primary care system in Hong Kong. With that mission in mind, the School of Health Sciences of the Caritas Institute of Higher Education and the School of Nursing and Health Studies of The Open University of Hong Kong organised the Community Health Conference 2018 on 30 August 2018 to explore a community-based service model of the delivery of primary health care services. Speakers, with different expertise, were invited from different areas around the world to share their knowledge, experience and views on the possible ways to contribute for the better health for all.

Fiona MacVane Phipps, *IJHG's* Review Editor, is a midwife by vocation as well as an educator and researcher. She presented an invited talk on her current research at the 17th Canadian Association of Midwives (CAM) annual conference in Gatineau, Quebec, in October 2018. The theme of this conference was "In good hands: midwives leading the way in reproductive health and rights". The conference started with a Global Health Symposium that focused on global reproductive health rights. A major feature of the conference was reproductive health rights of First Nations communities and work that First Nations midwives are doing to ensure that births remains in or returns to their communities. This was particularly relevant as the National Aboriginal Council of Midwives held their tenth anniversary celebration at the conference. The conference was an opportunity to make new contacts and meet old friends. Thanks to Emerald, *IJHG's* theme issue on maternity care governance in a global context (published in 2018 as Vol. 23 No. 1) was made freely available electronically to all conference delegates. Dr Phipps also represented the journal and looks forward to welcoming new articles from Canada on reproductive health in 2019. The CAM conference in 2019 will be held in Halifax.

In October, *IJHG's* publisher, Emma Leverton, attended the 5th Global Symposium on Health Systems Research in Liverpool, UK. The symposium is organised every two years by Health Systems Global (www.healthsystemsglobal.org/) and brings together delegates from

professional, academic, research, policy and practice backgrounds. Thousands of delegates were in attendance. Emma had the pleasure of speaking to a number of people who were looking to publish their academic research, and recommending *IJHG* as an avenue to publishing. This journal was very well received, as was Emerald's growing books programme with its new "short book" format, Emerald "Points" (<http://books.emeraldinsight.com/page/series-detail/Emerald-Points/>), particularly popular with delegates looking to publish their work in book format. The "short book" format enables Emerald to publish original research at between 20 and 50k words – in paperback and e-book, and on a fast-track publication schedule that gets research out to the market quickly. Overall, the conference was a success, and it was a pleasure to be a part of a symposium that plays such an important role in bringing the global health systems community together. The Sixth Global Symposium on Health Systems Research (HSR2020) will take place in the Eastern Mediterranean Region in Dubai and will welcome around 2,000 delegates over five days from 8 to 12 November 2020.

We close with our profound thanks to the following peer reviewers, who gave so graciously of their time to support this journal and, more broadly, international scientific collaboration. These individuals each assessed one or more manuscripts that we considered for publication in the journal's 2018 issues:

- Marcy Antonio, Canada.
- Priya Balasubramaniam, India.
- Karen Barker, UK.
- Alex Berland, Canada.
- Johan Berlin, Sweden.
- Alistair Brown, Australia.
- Ian Callanan, Ireland.
- Alan Cassels, Canada.
- Eric Chan, Hong Kong.
- Ayman Chit, USA.
- Anthony Chow, Canada.
- Ruth Deery, UK.
- Dela Dovlo, Ghana.
- Yvon Dufour, Canada.
- David Dunne, Canada.
- Ita Fung, Hong Kong.
- Katrina Glaister, UK.
- William Godolphin, Canada.
- Damian Greaves, Grenada.
- Mohammad Hajizadeh, Canada.
- Irina Ibragimova, Croatia.
- Shadrack Katuu, South Africa.
- Lovejeet Kaur, India.

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- Cathy Kline, Canada.
 - Liselotte Kweekel, The Netherlands.
 - Paulette Lacroix, Canada.
 - Elizabeth Loewen, Canada.
 - Christopher Loughlan, UK.
 - Fiona MacVane Phipps, UK.
 - Mahendran Maliapen, Canada.
 - Rose McCarthy, UK.
 - Wayne Miller, Canada.
 - Virginia Minogue, UK.
 - Mercy Mwanja, Uganda.
 - Yogesh Pai, India.
 - Ben Pearson, UK.
 - Ioana Popescu, Canada.
 - Alfonso Rosales, USA.
 - Inbal Salz, New Zealand.
 - Lisa Schilling, USA.
 - Pamela Schlauderaff, USA.
 - M.P. Sebastian, India.
 - Edward Septimus, USA.
 - Pushpendra Singh, India.
 - Jennifer Smith-Merry, Australia.
 - Chhavi Sodhi, India.
 - Allan Spigelman, Australia.
 - Antony Tomlinson, UK.
 - Kelly Veit, USA.
 - Jason Walton, USA.

David Birnbaum and Michael Decker

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