

Letter from the Editors

Lithos: A journal for students – run by students

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Peer-reviewed medical journals are essential to the dissemination of literature upon which the current and future understanding of medical practice is founded. These journals present an important, established, credible means of communicating the findings of clinical trials and other relevant information with the medical community.^{1,2} Pertaining to medical education, there is an emphasis placed on learners in today's curriculum which promotes the development of competencies required not only of skilled clinicians, but that of clinician researchers and health scientists as well.^{3,4} Consistent with these expanding expectations, there has been a global increase in the presence of student-run medical journals as a component of medical schools over the past thirty years.⁵ In Canada, student medical journals present with diverse scopes, structures and policies while operating in a dynamic setting that facilitates rapid staff turnover. However, these journals constitute an important training and mentoring opportunity for students not provided in other extracurricular activities.⁶ The presence of student-run medical journals at several Canadian institutions has served as an outlet for students to foster creativity and develop original ideas individually or in collaboration with peers and supervisors. These established journals have shown significant benefit for medical student development as well as medical research and practice.

Our editorial team is thrilled to be able to bring you the inaugural issue of Canada's newest student-managed medical journal: *Lithos* – The Memorial University Medical Journal. First and foremost, a thank you to our editorial team, reviewers, and supporters along with the numerous staff and faculty at Memorial University who have been instrumental in bringing this project to life. The journal name, *Lithos*, is a Greek word which translates to "stone", *Lithos*, and was chosen to represent the island of Newfoundland (colloquially referred to as "The Rock") where our medical school is located, while also providing implications to various stone-forming medical conditions. *Lithos* will feature a variety of health-related disciplines including clinical medicine, biomedical sciences, medical humanities,

community health and medical education. Although the primary focus is publishing work submitted by students, residents, and faculty within our medical school; submissions from any related discipline will also be considered with preference given to student authors. Consideration is also given to works from individuals affiliated with institutions outside of Memorial and appraised relative to the quality of the work and consistency with the ideals of our publication. We are committed to the dissemination of high-quality work which significantly contributes to current scholarly knowledge and debate.

The primary aim of *Lithos* is to stimulate the participation of students within our medical school in research, formal scholarly writing, and editing while also promoting the intellectual work of Memorial faculty and students. We view this as a means to augment training in expected competencies for future medical practitioners and researchers. Research skills are more important than ever given the blistering pace at which scholarly medical research is being generated across the globe. Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic this pace has only quickened, with one paper stating that submissions to Elsevier's suite of journals was up 58% in 2020 compared with the same period in 2019; the increase was even more pronounced in the health and medical sciences with a whopping 92% increase.⁷ While a significant proportion of this increase can be attributed to pandemic related research, the pattern reflects an overall trend of increasing publication rates year-over-year.

Moving forward, we intend for this journal to become a fixture of Memorial University's Faculty of Medicine as we expand in both reputation and readerships while providing another tool to promote student success. However, we cannot achieve this alone. We need you, the health research community at Memorial University, to help us nurture and grow this publication to achieve these goals. We are calling on this community to help this journal become the best it can be through the submission of appropriate scholarly works for consideration and simply reading/enjoying the

publication while spreading the word to others you think may also enjoy our content.

For more information on these topics please visit our website (journals.library.mun.ca/ojs/index.php/MUNMJ) or contact us directly at munmedjournal@mun.ca.

Thank you for taking the time to take in our inaugural issue and we hope you will continue to enjoy this publication for years to come!

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