

# What's in a name?

James Cave, *Editor-in-Chief*

## Welcome to the new *Drug and Therapeutics Bulletin*

Drug and Therapeutics Bulletin (*DTB*) has a rich heritage as a publication that offers clear, consumer-orientated advice on treatment. For over 56 years it has provided clinicians with independent rigorous appraisals regarding drugs and their therapeutic uses, combating received wisdom as well as the inflated claims of pharmaceutical marketing. It was first published in 1962 when few others were providing independent evidence-based reviews of drugs and therapeutics. It is hard to imagine the landscape at the time that *DTB* was launched. Truly, therapeutic drugs, as we understand them today, had only occupied the pharmacopoeia for two or three decades; the principles of evidence-based medicine were still a gleam in the eye of David Sackett, Archie Cochrane, David Eddy *et al*, and information for prescribers was largely limited to that published in the British National Formulary. The value of *DTB* was quickly established and when, in 1974, the Rt Hon. the Lord Owen CH, Minister of State at the Department of Health and Social Security, agreed to distribute it to all doctors in the UK, *DTB* helped to set

the prescribing culture for a whole generation of clinicians.

The process for developing articles for *DTB* was devised by its founding editor, Andrew Herxheimer, and refined by subsequent editors. Specialists were commissioned to produce a first draft that was subjected to a peer-review process (that could include as many as 50 reviewers) and editorial scrutiny through a succession of detailed commentary stages. The final draft might bear little resemblance to the original article, even to the point of having a different conclusion, and it was for this reason that the authors of articles were never named. The success of *DTB* has relied on the selfless work of these authors, reviewers and editors, and I want to thank them for their work.

Nevertheless, the absence of an author's name from *DTB* articles has meant that our content is not as easily found as we would like and may not show up in literature searches. In addition, reader focus groups that we ran recommended that we provide greater transparency over the provenance, development and authorship of our articles. Readers also suggested that we make *DTB* easier to navigate to help busy clinicians find our key messages. In response to

these requests, we are implementing some key changes to *DTB*'s content and appearance. From September onwards, we are including the names of our authors, improving the layout and navigation of the journal, as well as changing its colour.

What won't change is our commitment to providing independent evidence-informed articles. In line with our colleagues in the International Society of Drug Bulletins, we will maintain a strict conflict of interest policy. Authors will need to declare any financial or advisory relationship (paid or unpaid) with the pharmaceutical industry or related healthcare products industry (eg, medical devices or diagnostics), including the conduct of industry funded clinical trials, for the last 3 calendar years. Content will continue to be commissioned by the *DTB* editorial team, edited, circulated and peer-reviewed. As we have said before, at a time of change, these are fundamentals *DTB* readers can rely on.

**Competing interests** None declared.

**Provenance and peer review** Not commissioned; internally peer reviewed.

© Author(s) (or their employer(s)) [2018]. No commercial re-use. See rights and permissions. Published by BMJ.

DOI: 10.1136/dtb.2018.9.000017