

# Editorial

The *Australian Journal of Acupuncture and Chinese Medicine* was formally inaugurated at the Gala Dinner of the Australasian Acupuncture and Chinese Medicine Annual Conference in Brisbane on 19 May 2007. Professor Charlie Xue of RMIT University officially launched the Journal. James Flowers, AACMA President, and I, as Editor-in-Chief, also spoke at the launch. You can read more about the event and conference in our conference report section. The launch was a very exciting event for AACMA members.

This Journal is the only peer-reviewed English-language journal for Chinese medicine in the South Pacific region. The Editorial Board is committed to publishing high-quality research and clinical papers and to bridging the gap between scientific research and clinical practice. We hope that in ten years this Journal will be one of the most prestigious international journals in the field.

The concept of peer-review is rather new to Chinese medicine in Australia. Some authors have been surprised by the amount of information and detail we require from them, and at how thorough the peer-reviewers and Editorial Board members are at checking the accuracy of information, appropriateness of the methods and quality of the writing. We apply such rigorous criteria to all the articles in this Journal, including not only clinical trial reports, reviews and laboratory reports, but also case reports and general papers. This is the only way to ensure that our publication is of a high quality and will stand the test of time.

Research and practice are not separate entities: they complement each other. Practising Chinese medicine in Australia is a highly demanding job. Our patients are educated and well-informed. Western medicine in Australia is of a high standard and there are many other types of complementary medicine. These factors require us not only to know Chinese medicine comprehensively, but also to be open to modern medical sciences, clinical research methods and the use of evidence, so that we can communicate with our patients and other health professionals. Being thorough, being reflective and being

well-informed in practice and research are essential for the Chinese medicine profession to move forward. We hope that this Journal sets an example for all practitioners and researchers in this country.

In the past six months, two major events have happened for Chinese medicine: the establishment of the National Institute of Complementary Medicine (NICM) in June, and the publication of the International Standard Terminologies (IST) for Traditional Medicine in the Western Pacific Region of the World Health Organization (WHO) in August.

The NICM is jointly funded by the Commonwealth and New South Wales governments. Its establishment aims to meet the high demand for complementary medicine from the Australian public. The IST is the final product of four years of work by experts from eight countries. How the IST was developed and its impact on the future of Chinese medicine are discussed in this issue, along with preliminary steps that have been made toward an international standard for single-use acupuncture needles.

Speaking about linking research and practice, in this issue we publish a review paper on the use of ice for musculoskeletal pain, contrasting its use with moxibustion and warm herbs. The author finds limited evidence supporting the commonly used therapy of ice. A case report using moxibustion and acupuncture for an ankle injury also contributes to the discussion on this subject. These two papers illustrate contradictory practices between Chinese medicine and biomedicine and show how evidence can be used to inform and resolve such a situation.

This issue of the Journal also includes a pilot, randomised, sham-controlled clinical trial examining the efficacy of needleless electroacupuncture for osteoarthritis of the knee. The authors find that this type of acupuncture is more effective than the sham control for reducing stiffness and improving physical function.

Turning to herbal medicine research, an animal study finds that a herbal formula decreases aortal plaque induced by a high-cholesterol diet.

Continuing with our international news, the President of the New Zealand Register of Acupuncturists, Paddy McBride, has written a report about the status of acupuncture in New Zealand, while various reports of conferences are also included.

In this issue, we have introduced a new section into our main articles – ‘Clinical Commentary’. This includes boxed summaries so that our busy clinicians can more easily extract the key information from our articles.

We will bring you more exciting clinical research reports and other papers in 2008.

*Zhen Zheng*  
*Editor-in-Chief*