



## Twenty-five years on ...

Amongst many memorable recollections of 1984 two events stand out: Apple introduced the first Macintosh computer and Asgard Publishing Company launched the journal *Practical Diabetes*. It is salutary to reflect how over the subsequent 25 years both have evolved almost beyond recognition into the modern era. For the Editor, simply recording these few words via a computer keyboard is a huge change from the more laborious handwritten process of all those years ago, whilst for the publishers, now John Wiley & Sons, the benefits derived from electronic publishing have been considerable, and the opportunities for the future are immense. However, a balance has to be struck. There is an ongoing reassurance in receiving the journal in its present hard copy format. *Practical Diabetes International*, as it has now been known for many years, intends to continue as a regular paper journal, whilst further extending the potential of on-line publishing. By this means we hope that reader preferences are preserved but that new ways of attaining knowledge will be addressed.

Remarkably, the initial vision of Arun Bakshi, founding Editor, is as apt now as it was in 1984. His prescient editorial<sup>1</sup> in the first issue of September that year commented that 'the practice of medicine within the NHS had become increasingly multidisciplinary in character and that there was a need for a medical journal to reflect the diversity of professional interest in diabetes'. We feel confident that the combination of differing educational articles within each issue of *Practical Diabetes International* should meet this diversity of readership interest, but equally we are always keen to move forwards and meet new challenges ahead.

### Innovations, initiatives and education

Present day diabetes care and management have at their disposal a huge resource of new understanding and therapeutic opportunities, none of which was available nor even contemplated when the journal began 25 years ago. So much may now be taken for granted, but *Practical Diabetes International* has been privileged to record the considerable innovations and initiatives that have progressively emerged over this time, providing ever improving care for people with diabetes. For those interested in such historical happenings, Henry Connor's review in a special anniversary issue five years ago<sup>2</sup> is well worth reading for its fascinating account of these immense changes and how current treatment strategies have become increasingly evidenced based.

*Practical Diabetes International* has always seen its primary role as a vehicle for education, and indeed its origins were derived from the very first of Arun Bakshi's inspirational Isle of Wight conferences which catalysed the diabetes educational movement in the UK and led directly to the setting up of the then British Diabetic Association Section of Education. A phone call from Arun always conveyed a challenging request that none could refuse, well illustrated by the galaxy of founding editorial board members, all of whom have made substantial, subsequent contribution to diabetes care over the 25 years. Even the original papers published in the first issue of *Practical Diabetes* signalled stars in the ascendancy with an article on 'Outdoor

diabetic camps' by our current English Director for Diabetes, Rowan Hillson, and what has become a sentinel, trademark review on 'Diabetes, lipids and atherosclerosis' by John Betteridge. In particular, the concept that 'Diabetes [might be] a disease for general practice', radically proposed by Peter Tasker at the time, was clearly anticipating the future wholesale shift of diabetes service provision into the community and primary care setting. For its present relevance and current interest to the readership we have pleasure in reprinting this article (p xxx), the principles of which have evidently been borne out by the passage of years.

### Hot topics and critical appraisal

However, knowledge gained through education is a forever continuous and changing process, and the journal has had to adapt accordingly. At times that has required a review of what previously might have seemed established best practice.<sup>3</sup> Hot therapeutic topics of the moment may not necessarily maintain their momentum, but we can be sure that there is still much new ahead to occupy and generate opinion within the future pages of the journal. That is the interest and fascination of diabetes. A journal such as *Practical Diabetes International* has to recognise its responsibilities and editorial governance has become fundamental to its process. We are greatly indebted to the many peer reviewers who have helped maintain journal standards. By this means, we endeavour to provide up to date and topical medical knowledge with 'immediacy of information along with an opportunity for reflection and critical appraisal'.<sup>4</sup> However, can or should the journal do more? Editorial commentary carries a powerful and persuasive potential that might 'influence political debate',<sup>5</sup> but with due responsibility we do believe that the journal should contribute to discussions on the important issues of the day.

### Past, present and future

This 25th anniversary issue marks a very special occasion for all of the editorial and publishing team both past and present. The original aims are still preserved: providing sound practical and clinical guidance on high quality diabetes care to the multidisciplinary professional diabetes team in whatever setting. Much has changed in a quarter of a century, but the basic educational principles remain. Looking backwards it has been a time of tremendous experience and understanding, but *Practical Diabetes International* moves on and very much looks forwards to what almost certainly will prove to be further exciting and innovative times ahead.

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### References

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3. Shaw KM, Cummings MH. HRT: increased cardiac risk in diabetes. *Pract Diabetes Int* 2003; **20**: 268-269.
4. Shaw KM. The journal comes of age. *Pract Diabetes Int* 2004; **21**: 46-47.
5. Kassirer JP. Should medical journals try to influence political debate? *N Engl J Med* 1999; **340**: 466-467.