



# What our AFP means to me

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Education and research are core business for the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners. One of our longstanding vehicles for general practitioner education and the publication of research findings in Australian general practice is our journal, *Australian Family Physician*, the flagship publication of the RACGP.

I first stumbled across AFP when I was a medical student in the early 1980s. Multiple copies of the silver covered journal were delivered to the clinical school at the Royal Melbourne Hospital. The articles about clinical topics were very practical with information presented in a way that helped to provide perspective on what was common, what was important and what should not be missed. This was a marked contrast to many of the textbooks that were recommended reading in my medical course and which failed to provide a lot of the practical advice needed for daily clinical practice.

As a GP registrar I found the quizzes and clinical challenges in AFP were a great aid in my development as a young GP as well as a boon to those of us preparing for the FRACGP exams.

When I joined the Department of General Practice at Monash University as an academic registrar in 1988, I discovered that the Medical Editor of AFP was the same man who was inspiring generations of medical students at that university through his innovative and practical approaches to medical education. This man was John Murtagh. Like many other young academics I developed much of my own teaching style from John's example as a role model. I

still like to focus on 'Golden Rules' and the use of examples from my interactions with real people in my clinical teaching. John developed many of the highly popular features of our journal providing practical tips for busy GPs and many of the popular segments which continue to this day. The grounding for John's very successful series of textbooks began during his time with AFP.

Our AFP is the major journal for Australia's GPs and is an internationally respected Medline listed, peer reviewed medical journal. As a commitment to our discipline, the RACGP ensures that AFP is delivered to all GPs in Australia, regardless of whether or not they are members of the RACGP.

*Australian Family Physician* was launched in 1972 having been preceded by the *Annals of General Practice* which the RACGP commenced in the 1950s. The pattern of our journal has been strongly influenced by our medical editors. We have been fortunate in our talented roll call of medical editors, including foundation Editor Wes Fabb, who was followed by Mick Dunn, Judith Lumley, James Breheny, John Murtagh, Lyn Clearihan, Jenni Parsons and Linda Calabresi, all supported by many associate and assistant medical editors over the years. They are all GPs with a passion for medical writing who have each added their own style to our journal while always maintaining its strong education and research focus. Chris Del Mar has led the recent developments of the section of the journal dedicated to the publication of research - with a focus on research carried out in Australian general practice by Australian GPs and with a

strong emphasis on how the findings of that research are relevant to clinical practice.

Our journal has been supported by a dedicated board and panel of GPs, some with an academic background, some without, all with a strong clinical background and a commitment to general practice education and research. The Editorial Advisory Panel determine the themes for each edition of the journal, recommend topics for inclusion and potential writers, provide peer review of contributions and help set the future directions for our journal to ensure that it remains relevant to today's GPs. The panel is a mixture of senior colleagues, recent Fellows and registrars. Members of the panel receive no remuneration for their contribution, just the satisfaction of seeing the results of their commitment each month. I joined the panel about 10 years ago following an open call to members of the RACGP to support our journal. You'll find the names of the current panel and board inside the front cover of this edition.

We have also been very fortunate to have had dedicated staff who have supported our journal and who continue to ensure that we have a high quality product and that all our deadlines are met.

What does our AFP mean to you? I still enjoy reading my AFP each month. I hope you do too. If you don't like something about our journal, please let us know. Equally if you find elements of the journal valuable or inspiring, we would like to know about that as well. You can be assured that during my term as President of the RACGP our journal will continue to thrive.