

The year ahead

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Every year when December suddenly arrives, I feel as though I have spent the year in the middle of an 'absence', and I can't quite work out what has happened to the year. When I was a child it seemed an eternity from one Christmas to the next. The world turns much faster now, and even my 12 year old daughter thinks the years pass very quickly.

In the world of *Australian Family Physician*, 2005 has been a busy and interesting one, and we would like to take this time to thank our authors for their high quality articles and for their large time commitment in what is often a very busy clinical and nonclinical professional schedule. We also thank their families, for the weekends authors have spent writing for *AFP*, rather than as time with family and friends! Our reviewers are also vitally important contributors and we thank them for their enthusiasm, insightful comments and practical suggestions on manuscripts, and for meeting often very tight deadlines. Our dedicated Editorial Board members have provided strategic direction, sound editorial advice, and generated many excellent ideas for *AFP* in our teleconferences and face-to-face meetings throughout the year, and have also contributed to *AFP* as authors and reviewers.

Despite all this hard work, *AFP* would not come out each month without our small, incredibly busy and efficient production team who cope with missed deadlines with good grace, transform manuscripts, organise covers, find images, design, and generally make good things happen.

Planning for 2006 is well underway and we hope to bring you a broad range of relevant,

practical information and educational material on topics including psychosis, gastrointestinal malignancies, diagnostic imaging, diabetes, wounds and lumps, postnatal care, weight, palliative care, pelvic pain, and workplace injury. As well, we will continue our commitment to publishing original research and to encouraging discussion and debate through our education, professional practice and letters sections of the journal. We are keen to continue to encourage general practitioner authorship in *AFP*, so please put your fingers to the keyboard and send us your article on a clinical or professional practice topic, your research project, or your opinions in a letter to the editor.

In 2006 you will note a few changes to *AFP*. The first will be in the January/February issue which will have a fresh new layout, designed to improve clarity and readability of articles. Also in January, we are moving to an electronic manuscript submission process. Authors will be required to submit manuscripts via a dedicated website accessed via the RACGP website and will be able to check the progress of their manuscript online. Reviewers will also log on and complete reviews online. Invitations to review and decisions on submitted manuscripts will be sent via email. Having spent an hour or two on the demonstration site, I found the process very user friendly. It will allow us to reduce submission to decision time for authors, spread the review load more efficiently between our reviewers, and allocate reviewers more appropriately. When this process goes 'live', those of you on our reviewer database will receive an

email requesting you to reconfirm your details and review interests. If you would like to join our team of reviewers please let us know by emailing afp@racgp.org.au.

The RACGP website is also currently being upgraded and, as part of this upgrade, *AFP* online will become more user friendly and fully searchable, which together with the linkout facility from PubMed that is currently available, will assist readers wishing to investigate particular topics in more depth. We also hope that this will give us the opportunity to enhance the sense of *AFP* community by the use of online discussions.

For those of you who are financial RACGP members, you will receive **check** with *AFP* for the first 6 months of 2006 as part of your membership package. **check** is a home based QA&CPD program for GPs. Each issue consists of a series of clinical cases accompanied by questions and answers designed to bring out the salient points of the topic in question. Each unit of **check** has associated activities for an 'active learning module'. We hope that receiving **check** will assist members in meeting their continuing professional development needs in 2006.

From all of us at *AFP*, we wish you a happy and safe festive season, a relaxing holiday (if you are having one) and a professionally and personally fulfilling 2006.

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