

# Australian Family Physician celebrates sixty years of publication

Stephen A Margolis

*Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow. The important thing is not to stop questioning. – Albert Einstein*

## Celebration!

This month we proudly salute the 60th birthday of the flagship scientific journal of Australian general practice. *Australian Family Physician (AFP)* was born in 1956 as the *Annals of General Practice*. This was a time of excitement as Australians celebrated a 'coming of age' and new-found independence. The first summer Olympics in the southern hemisphere, and first outside Europe or North America, arrived in Melbourne. Television transmission commenced.

General practitioners (GPs) in Australia and Britain in the 1950s sensed an opportune time to create a separate identity from other medical specialties. In 1951, Fraser Rose and John Hunt published a letter in the *British Medical Journal* outlining their proposal for the establishment of a college for GPs, a critical step in the creation of the College of General Practitioners in 1952.<sup>1</sup> With a significant number of Australians as members, state-based faculties of the British college were then established in Australia. In 1958 these joined together to create the Australian College of General Practitioners and, on receiving the royal charter in 1969, The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP).

In the midst of the RACGP's foundation period, the first edition of the *Annals of General Practice* was released in September 1956 as a quarterly publication, with Dr Carl Gunther as inaugural editor. At the outset, it was noted that content 'will

be selected for their general practitioner interest'.<sup>2</sup> The first edition included clinical articles on congenital heart disease and infective hepatitis, as well as medical news. This quarterly publication expanded in size through the 1960s to over 50 pages per edition. By 1969, with the journal increasingly supporting the heart of Australian general practice, the RACGP moved to an expanded scope, content, page size and number of editions per year. This culminated in the birth of *AFP* in February 1972, with Dr Wes Fab as editor.

The name change reflected the worldwide momentum of the era for GPs to claim ownership of primary healthcare as a separate discipline from other branches of medicine. *AFP* expanded on *Annals of General Practice* with increased emphasis on original, scientific and educational content. The move was timely, with *AFP* able to support the arrival of the first formal training program for GPs, the Family Medicine Program, established through Australian Government funding in 1973.

Since then, *AFP* has moved from strength to strength as a strategic facilitator for the ongoing scientific development of general practice as a distinct medical specialty. In particular, *AFP* focuses on original material that considers the best international evidence and crystallises this information to be relevant and appropriate for the Australian context. *AFP* remains a major educational resource for primary healthcare at all levels of experience, providing contemporary information that helps contextualise important advances in our discipline. *AFP* continues to support and nurture general practice research by providing a key venue for publication and dissemination of findings, illustrated through a personal reflection by Winzenberg.<sup>3</sup>

Since its inception, a key guiding principle for *AFP* has been to support and improve the health and wellbeing of our patients. To illustrate some of the changes in contemporary practice that *AFP* has documented across the years, this month we include a paper from the Bettering the Evaluation and Care of Health (BEACH) team that highlights aspects of this evolution.<sup>4</sup> With the doctor–patient interaction a fundamental role in general practice, we include a paper by Stevens exploring the development of the medical gaze.<sup>5</sup> Highlighting the change in practice logistics incorporating a decline in house calls by GPs, Dammery provides a historical perspective of the doctor's bag.<sup>6</sup>

Finally, the *AFP* team would like to thank our readership and enthusiasts across the decades. With your encouragement and support, we look forward to continuing to support the evolving face of Australian general practice in the decades to come.

## Author

Stephen A Margolis MBBS, MFM, MD, GEM, DRANZCOG, FRACGP FACRRM, is the Senior Medical Editor of *AFP*; Professor, School of Medicine, Griffith University, Queensland; and Medical Officer with the Royal Flying Doctor Service.

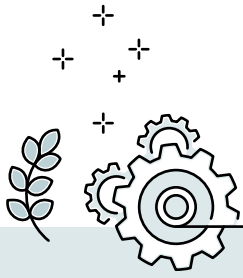
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# Australian Family Physician

incorporating *Annals of General Practice*

1956–2016



**1956** ▲  
First issue of *Annals of General Practice*; black and white, digest (14 x 21 cm) size, produced via linotype. Subscription cost: two shillings and sixpence per part, or 10 shillings per year



**1959** ▲  
Reports first annual meeting of College, held 20 March

**1961** ▲  
Full colour plates introduced



**1971** ▲  
Multiple choice questions first appear



**1972** ▲  
First issue of *Australian Family Physician (AFP)*; current standard journal size with two-tone cover. Introduces 'Checkpoint' quiz, precursor to 'Clinical Challenge'



**1981** ▲  
Adopts Vancouver referencing system. Further redesign, featuring cover artwork



**1990** ▲  
RACGP adopts desktop publishing, *AFP* designed in-house. Circulation reaches 19,600

19,600



**1995** ▲  
Now provides five opportunities for CME points via quizzes



**1996** ▲  
'Clinical Challenge' multiple choice quiz appears. Introduces 'Reason' research supplement, published twice a year



**2004** ▲  
Redesign for more contemporary look. Clinical Challenge moves online. Achieves listing in Thomson Science Citation Index Expanded



**2006** ▲  
Adopts Manuscript Central/ScholarOne to manage submissions. Website upgraded, fully searchable and linked with PubMed



**2009** ▲  
Achieves initial impact factor of 0.57. Awards first 'Best general practice research article' at GP09



**2014** ▲  
Circulation peaks at 43,666



**2015** ▲  
Design revamp including new cover and logo. Adopts iThenticate plagiarism checking platform



**1962** ▲  
Significant increase in volume and scope of advertising.

\$4.00



**1966** ▲  
Subscription cost after introduction of decimal currency: \$4 per year



**1969** ▲  
The College is granted the prefix 'Royal'

**1973** ▲  
Becomes foundation member of National Medical Media Council (NMMC)



**1976** ▲  
Admitted to *Index Medicus*, forerunner of MEDLINE



**1980** ▲  
Revamp of cover, sporting a minimal 'futuristic' design

**1991** ▲  
'Research Notebook' introduced to highlight general practice research



**1992** ▲  
Two decades of *AFP* marked by reproducing papers from first issue with postscripts from original authors



**1997** ▲  
First *AFP* web page



**2000** ▲  
'Reason' supplement becomes section in its own right



**2007** ▲  
Further redesign with new logo. Establishes International Advisory Panel, in addition to existing Editorial Board



**2008** ▲  
Joins Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE)



**2012** ▲  
*AFP* web page adapted for multiple devices, improved navigation and search; articles available in html and pdf. e-letters online correspondence introduced



**2016** ▲  
*Australian Family Physician* (incorporating *Annals of General Practice*) celebrates Diamond Jubilee. Circulation 34,171

34,171



DIAMOND JUBILEE

