Editorial

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In a community well served by a wide variety of publications and where managing information flow can prove daunting, one might ask why another healthcare publication is necessary. However, after speaking with medical practitioners and healthcare professionals, it became clear that while there are publications which cover clinical issues and others communication and public relations in general, there was a gap in the market for a professional Journal which focused specifically on the unique challenges of improving communication management in all aspects of healthcare delivery.

Consequently, the Journal of Communication in Healthcare (JCH) has been designed to focus on new thinking and best practice in communicating medical information to patients, healthcare staff and the public but, crucially, it also analyses communication management in other key relationships integral to effective healthcare delivery, including those between clinicians, managers, policy-makers, researchers and other key stakeholders. JCH aims to help bridge communication gaps between these communities where they exist and highlight the role of effective communication both in patient care and in the overall context of managing healthcare organisations, including risk/reputation management and media relations. This more holistic approach to communication in healthcare was seen as crucial to the Journal’s aims and scope.

We also encountered a belief among healthcare professionals that, although there was a widespread recognition of the value of communication in healthcare, the rigorous measurement and evaluation techniques practised elsewhere in the healthcare community are not always applied. Therefore, JCH not only seeks to advance understanding of communication skills, techniques, strategies and best practice and how they can be used in healthcare but, crucially, it also shows how their impact can be measured in a practical format which can be applied by clinicians and managers ‘in the front line’ of healthcare delivery. They felt that this need is increasingly acknowledged but that more detailed intelligence is required to take it forward. A peer-reviewed professional Journal that provides an intellectually rigorous forum for healthcare professionals to share such information was felt to be an invaluable tool in helping to achieve this.

So, with that goal in mind, what exactly does the Journal seek to publish? The core aim of our published content is to provide best practice guidance on how to improve communication management in healthcare in the form of ‘how to’ actionable advice and ‘lessons learned’ from fellow professionals. JCH focuses on publishing articles, briefings and applied research by medical practitioners, communication managers, policy-makers and other professionals documenting their practical experience and showcasing new thinking that aids fellow professionals in improving their communication skills, techniques, strategies and best practice. As such, it provides information in a format that supports professional development, internal training and the overall improvement of communication management practice, as well as raising the profile of communication management within...
healthcare organisations. There will also be a strong emphasis on publishing case studies addressing the real-life problems faced by medical practitioners and communications professionals, as well as the techniques they have used to combat them. It is our intention that the Journal provides a forum for all those in the healthcare community to share their experience, expertise and thinking on topics including:

- Communicating medical information to patients
- Successfully influencing patient choice/behaviour
- Measuring the effectiveness of communication and communicating its value
- Effective internal communications and workplace training
- Understanding patients’ needs and perceptions of health issues
- Reputation management and its value in healthcare
- Patient interview techniques
- Developing and implementing communication techniques, strategies and models
- The role of communication in fundraising and securing funding
- Managing media relations
- Bridging the communications gap between clinicians and managers
- Effectively using surveys
- Crisis and risk management
- Public health and community relations communications
- Communicating with health authorities, agencies and government
- Legal considerations.

The roster of authors scheduled to submit articles for Volume 1 already includes professionals from: Blue Cross Blue Shield of Florida; Brighton and Hove City Primary Care Trust; Bronx-Lebanon Hospital Center; Cardinal Health; Feinberg School of Health; Heart of England Foundation NHS Trust; Macmillan Cancer Support; Newham NHS Primary Care Trust; NHS Direct; Literacy Assistance Center, New York; Picker Institute; Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center; Race for Health; Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh; Scott & White; Sheba Medical Center, Israel; Sheffield South West Primary Care Trust; St Georges Hospital, London; St Michael’s Hospital, Toronto and the UK Department of Health. It has been especially pleasing to see such a varied, international range of authors willing to share their expertise, experience and thinking in the pages of the Journal.

Crucially, the JCH is also guided by an expert editorial board of renowned healthcare experts including medical practitioners, communications professionals, policy-makers and leaders from healthcare associations and patient groups. A full list can be found inside the front cover of this Journal. Not only do they set the editorial agenda for the Journal but also peer-review all content submitted, to ensure that it is authoritative, practical and — above all — relevant. They help ensure that the Journal publishes neither articles that seek to promote a product or service, nor esoteric research pieces which cannot be applied in practice.

We are delighted to bring you this inaugural issue of Journal of Communication in Healthcare which, I am sure you will agree, makes fascinating reading. We welcome the submission of papers, case studies and feedback at any time and look forward to hearing from you.

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