EDITORIAL

Changes at Health Policy and Planning

Sara Bennett,1 Richard Coker1 and Alexandra Conseil2

1Editors-in-Chief and 2Interim Journal Development Officer

Last year we commissioned a strategic review of Health Policy and Planning (HPP) to better position our journal in an increasingly complex publishing landscape and enhance its relevance and impact. As part of this review, we surveyed our readers, authors and editorial board. We also compared HPP against 13 competitors with respect to (1) performance indicators, (2) submission number and acceptance rate, (3) editorial structure, (4) governance structures, (5) turnaround decision and publication times, (6) geographical focus of readership and authorship, (7) financing, (8) range of web-based features, (9) assessment of research impact, (10) engagement in capacity building of authors from low- and middle-income countries, and (11) marketing practices. It clearly emerged from this strategic exercise that HPP ranks very well in comparison with other journals in the field. With an impact factor of 2.79 in 2010 and immediacy index of 1.069 in 2010, the articles published in HPP are cited more frequently and much earlier in peer-reviewed journals than the articles published by the majority of its competitors. Furthermore, the number of submissions to HPP nearly doubled between 2008 and 2011.

However, findings from the strategic review revealed some gaps. The growing popularity of HPP is good news, but the increasingly large number of submissions has also become a significant challenge for our team of editors, which until recently consisted of only two co-Editors-in-Chief. In light of this, we decided to expand our team of editors and recruited eight new editors, who will be joining our editorial team as Section Editors between September and November 2012. They will work in pairs as experts in one of the following areas: Health Systems Research, Health Economics, Health Policy, and Evaluation and Implementation Research. We include a brief introduction to our new Section Editors at the bottom of this editorial. We would also like to take this opportunity to inform you that we now have on board a statistical adviser, Andrew Hutchings, who is a Lecturer at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. We hope that this substantial restructuring will help refine the quality of our reviewing process and speed up our decision and publications times.

It also emerged from the review that HPP has underused new social media and other web-based applications to connect with

Welcome to our new Section Editors!

Health Systems Research

- Dr Kabir Sheikh, Research Scientist and Director, Health Governance Hub, Public Health Foundation of India
- Mrs Sandra Mounier-Jack, Lecturer in Health Policy, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine

Health Economics

- Dr Jo Borghi, Lecturer in Health Economics, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine
- Dr Catherine Goodman, Senior Lecturer in Health Economics and Policy, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine

Health Policy

- Professor Lucy Gilson, Professor of Health Policy and Systems, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and School of Public Health and Family Medicine at the University of Cape Town
- Dr Jeremy Shiffman, Associate Professor of Public Administration and Policy, American University

Evaluation and Implementation Research

- Professor Rifat Atun, Professor of International Health Management, Imperial College London
- Dr Joanna Schellenberg, Reader in Epidemiology and International Health, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine
its readers and authors. In addition, we realised that the journal needs a more strategic approach to the marketing and dissemination of articles, in order to further expand our base of readers and prospective authors, and also to enhance the visibility of published articles. To improve the communications and development aspects of HPP, we have decided to create a new position and hire a Journal Communications and Development Officer who will focus on the communications and development side of the Journal. Our new Journal Communications and Development Officer should be also in post in autumn 2012.

HPP is unique among academic journals in its multi-disciplinary approach to understanding health policy and system challenges in low- and middle-income countries. We plan to maintain and strengthen this focus, providing a platform for policy debates, methodological discussions and the dissemination of high quality evidence about health systems. It is clear that the community of researchers and practitioners engaged in this field is growing rapidly, demonstrated for example by the success of the First Global Symposium on Health Systems Research in Montreux, the high number of submissions to the follow-on meeting in Beijing, and the rapid growth in submissions to HPP. We will serve and support this dynamic field, and help nurture some of the exciting new developments within it such as the growing interest in evidence-to-policy processes, and implementation research.

We truly hope these changes will greatly benefit you, our readers and authors. We also take this opportunity to thank Tamsin Kelk who has been Assistant Editor for many years. Tamsin will be leaving us in September 2012 in order to pursue a masters degree. Tamsin has been an excellent team member, has helped guide the journal’s development over the years, and supported the editors, board members, reviewers and authors in numerous large and small ways. We wish her all the best in her new endeavours. Diana Epstein at Oxford University Press will be taking over editorial assistant responsibilities from mid-September. On a last note, we would like to remind you that since January 2012, HPP has moved from a bi-monthly to six-weekly publication.