In this issue of *Occupational Medicine*

In 2009 *Occupational Medicine* carried out a readership survey, an author survey and a blue sky thinking day where we gathered 20 active minds together and asked them searching questions about the journal. We wanted to know if we were meeting the needs of our readers despite the regularly positive feedback we receive whenever we meet readers. We also wanted to know where the journal should go in the future given the changing nature of publishing and the increasing importance of electronic media and new methods of communication. The readership and authorship surveys were both positive and reassuring but didn’t suggest a radically different direction. We therefore gave the think tank the remit that staying the same was not an option; whilst they strove admirably to investigate this and came up with a wealth of new ideas, we still ended up with the concept of if it isn’t broken don’t fix it. We have however as a result of this soul searching commenced a programme to implement stronger governance for the journal and will develop defined future objectives and a 5 year plan that sits with those of the Society of Occupational Medicine. Together with a further strengthening of the editorial team we feel this enables us to ensure continuity of the journal and that it will continue to provide the research and writing that our readers appreciate. We know for instance that *Occupational Medicine* publishes proportionately more public sector research than any other occupational medicine journal. Whilst research about teachers and the police may not be academically sexy, these are very important employment sectors and relevant to many practising occupational physicians. *Occupational Medicine* also continues to publish research by occupational physicians not necessarily employed by academia or in the health service and whilst this is a smaller proportion than we would like, we are keen to see this continue. We are also starting to think of additional ways in which we can stimulate more practising occupational physicians, particularly those in training, to carry out research and get it published. So, for the moment, any radical changes are on hold, we plan more of the same but better things as well as doing our thing better. One change you will notice is that we have reinstated our yellow cover. The purple cover, as attractive as it has been, was a celebration of the Society’s 75th anniversary and you shouldn’t judge a journal by its cover.

The concept of ‘man flu’ is not normally one that appears on the pages of this journal, but in this issue we carry an interesting piece of prospective research from South Korea which lends some credence to the notion that it does actually exist and it may be a marker of work-related stress [1]. The researchers followed up more than 1200 workers from 40 companies for 6 months having first collected details about their work and self-reported work stressors. Those experiencing stress at the outset were more likely to report having had the common cold and for those in the high job demands group the odds ratio of reporting a cold was 1.74. On the other hand no such relationship was found in females, although the authors point out that this could be due to the smaller sample size. In our next issue, Jill Morrison will be discussing recent research which has shown that prior to going on long-term absence, there is often a change in general practitioner consultation frequency and an increase in measured stress scores. This may occur over a number of years before the individual actually becomes long-term absent [2]. As the vast majority of those off work for more than 6 months will never work again, this type of research is important in our understanding of what is happening in this process. Apparently ordinary occurrences such as the common cold or attending primary care can be a warning sign that all is not right and perhaps timely intervention may prevent worklessness and the accompanying decline in health.

In subsequent issues this year we will be hosting a series of articles to explain the latest information technology and how it might be relevant for occupational physicians. Nikki Cordell will explain concepts such as Twitter and Facebook, and we will explore the use of iPhone applications and Google Groups. Later in the year *Occupational Medicine* will produce its first podcast and its second virtual issue to celebrate the centenary of the Health and Safety Laboratory.

**John Hobson**

Honorary Editor

**References**