
LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Transition at the Scope

Dear Reader,

The Spring 2010 issue coincides with a time of transition: both the implementation of a new platform for *TuftScope* and the culmination of sweeping US healthcare reform. As anticipated after the fall 2008 election, though arguably overshadowed by more than a year of acrimonious public and political debate, President Barack Obama signed the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act into law on March 23rd. However, in the lukewarm wake of this legislative reform package (a number of whose stipulations are delayed as far into the future as 2018) remain still ongoing reforms: the ever-present spread of accessible technologies, a newfound sensitivity to best-practices in medicine, and the inexorable outpour of scientific findings as well as academic reconsiderations of health solutions.

While the country waits to experience the first effects of these sweeping healthcare reform changes, Sarah Moreland addresses potential shortfalls of the Mental Health Parity Act of 2008 with recommendations for new legislation to protect Americans with mental health conditions. On the scale of multinational efforts abroad, Piyali Kundu investigates the effectiveness of cigarette taxation policies in the European Union, highlighting where this public health effort might have led to the spread of smuggling, organized crime, and potentially increased consumption in some European markets. Finally, Allison Marron illuminates the hurdles met by polio inoculation efforts in Nigeria and Michael Cross analyzes the science behind the development of varicella vaccine schedules. From issues of governance in Nigeria on the front of the global polio eradication effort to fighting homelessness through preventing discrimination against individuals with mental health needs, this issue has something to appeal to a spectrum of public health interests.

In the realm of health science and improving practices through evidence-based medicine, *TuftScope* offers Lauren-Elizabeth Palmer's Feature Interview with Kevin Pho, MD, a web-savvy physician-blogger determined to improve primary care. Additionally, Max Leiserson examines the digital, wireless, and globalized future of medical imaging technology. From the scientific perspective, Alan Hsu explores genome-wide association studies aimed at identifying the etiology of diseases, while John Salvatore analyzes findings supporting the theory that oxytocin imbalance plays a central role in autism spectrum disorders. News and Views and Research Highlights both return in this issue to provide an overview of current medical news.

As the year comes to a close for *TuftScope*, the implementation of new ideas and the induction of another generation of *TuftScope* editors have proven the sweeping improvements set out in early 2009 a success. Due to the assiduous efforts of our online team, the new website has led to the establishment of the *TuftScope Blog*, whose constant updates provide a window into current healthcare developments. The accompanying online automated submission and review system provides a streamlined means for authors to find a venue to voice their views. Additionally, the hundreds of unique visitors to *TuftScopeJournal.org* each week have access to our older and newer material, all archived and available for download and further reading. We are pleased to announce that in recognition of these efforts, *TuftScope* was the recipient of the 2009-2010 Tufts University Office of Student Life Imagination and Innovation Award.

It was a pleasure serving the journal during this exciting time for *TuftScope*. This issue would not be possible if not for the coordinated efforts of the Editorial Staff. Special thanks are owed to Professor Harry Bernheim for his indispensable counsel, Lauren-Elizabeth Palmer for overseeing the transition, Max Leiserson for managing the online platform, Eliza Heath for her invaluable layout and design work, and lastly Alice Tin and the TCU Senate for financial guidance and support, respectively.

We hope you enjoy the issue!

Sincerely,

Michael Shusterman and Ron Zipkin