

Editorial

Grech Victor, Borg-Buontempo Mariella on behalf of *QAIAC*

The Merit Award Scheme

The Merit Award Scheme was launched in November 2007 by the Malta Government with the intention of rewarding good practice. This is accordance with the Government-Medical Association of Malta agreement which “recognizes the need for specialists to keep abreast of the rapid progress made in the various fields of medical and health specialization and the effort it takes for such specialists to keep themselves abreast of developments, to improve professional standards and to provide quality assurance in the health system.”

The ultimate aim behind the Merit Award Scheme is to improve the quality of health care delivery within the public service. For this reason, the Quality Assurance Initiative Adjudicating Committee (QAIAC) was set up in order to ensure that submitted proposals were compliant with the scheme.

Suitable proposals include research studies, publications in peer reviewed journals, clinical audit, protocols and guidelines, and participation in the Foundation programme.

Reviewing for the Malta Medical Journal

The peer review process continues to be a crucial element in scholarly publication. Review consists of the evaluation of work by one or more individuals of similar competence to the producers of said work. Such review, if properly undertaken, constitutes a form of self-regulation of a particular field of study.^{1,2} Reviewing is unpaid and unsung work, and takes a considerable amount of time to accomplish properly.

The solution

QAIAC has agreed to accept Malta Medical Journal (MMJ) reviews as valid proposals for the purpose of the Merit Award Scheme. Three reviews will be considered as one proposal for any one given year. Only one such proposal per year will be entertained.

The three reviews need not be carried out in one specific year and are cumulative. The MMJ will issue numbered certificates for such reviews, backdating to the start of the year 2012.

Reviews will include a bespoke form and must be carried out to a sufficiently high standard and in a timely manner in order to qualify for certification.

Reviewers will also be asked to re-review resubmissions in order to ensure that authors have complied with instructed changes and other amendments.

We sincerely hope that this will incentivise individuals to undertake high-quality peer review for the MMJ, while recognising its value as contributing to health care quality improvement.

Interested potential reviewers may indicate this by sending an email to the journal's secretary, Ms. Elizabeth Cassar (elizabeth.cassar@um.edu.mt) indicating their area/s of expertise.

References

1. Hong ST. Lesson of the seventh international congress on peer review and biomedical publication. J Korean Med Sci. 2013;28:1413-4.
2. Horrobin DF. The philosophical basis of peer review and the suppression of innovation. JAMA. 1990;263:1438-41.

Cover Picture:

'Seascape - final push',
oil on canvas.

By Maurice Falzon

Maurice Falzon is a consultant anaesthetist and has never had any formal teaching and instruction in art. After trying out various media he has gravitated to oils and pencil drawings.