

## Editorial

### Some Health Challenges for the Coming Year

In this last journal issue for the year the Editorial Committee, on behalf of the Council of the Association, would like to extend to members the Season's best greetings. We are particularly grateful to our authors and reviewers without whose input this journal cannot maintain its quality and peer review status.

The year 2005 saw many challenges in the health sector that would require comment in subsequent issues. Maternal and childhood mortality, brain drain and conditions of service of health personnel, National Health Insurance, the proposed change in health care paradigm that focuses on preventive and promotive health, the malaria treatment policy and the carnage on our roads are but a few of the challenges facing the health sector. The handling of health issues by the media and the use of the media to advance the cause of health policies is a matter that needs attention. It is also obvious that many of the engaging health issues are not restricted to the domain of the Ministry of Health. Indeed the problems can be linked to several ministries and government agencies.

The solution to the problem of road traffic accidents, for example, is not health sector specific. Their unfortunate consequence knows no boundaries. Thus the medical fraternity and indeed the whole nation will forever remember the tragic loss of three dedicated doctors— Professor JKM Quartey, Dr. Isaac Bentsi and Dr. Benjamin Osei-Wiafe - in a road traffic accident in August 2005. The onus however lies with the health sector to as always to point the way for the various agencies to take on the appropriate measures to limit unnecessary loss of life.

In November 2005 the Ministry of Health held a forum to discuss its new theme of “Creating Wealth through Health”. The new focus on good nutrition and lifestyle changes for good health will face one of its greatest challenges in the attitude of both healthy and sick individuals to the change in behaviour that is required. Innovative ways of delivering behaviour change messages to the public have to be developed. Another challenge in this respect is the management of those environmental factors that affect health, particularly important public health problems like malaria, diarrhoea and respiratory tract infections. Similar challenges exist for diseases associated with poor lifestyles.

There will be opportunities for input by the medical profession into the development of the Ministry of Health's new health strategy in 2006. We should not lose these opportunities but rather exploit them to impact meaningfully on the health agenda of the country.

In this issue also, we publish a letter from Professor Felix Konotey-Ahulu asking for contributions to the medical textbook to commemorate Ghana's Jubilee. The Jubilee year started in March 2005 and hence there is little time left for this project. Those who have offered to contribute pieces and those interested are encouraged to take up the challenge and contact him.

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**Professor David Ofori-Adjei**

*Editor-in-Chief, Ghana Medical Journal,  
Noguchi Memorial Institute of Medical Research,  
Legon*