

# Farewell from the editor

Tim Dean

**A**fter 23 years at the helm of *Prescriber* I am hanging up my editing pen. It was April 1990 when I watched the first issue of *Prescriber* come off the presses and being sent to doctors and pharmacists around the UK.

*Prescriber* was something new – we were focusing on prescribing, and particularly something we called at the time rational prescribing. This was the zeitgeist, tapping into the idea that prescribing should not only be effective but cost-effective. Prescribing Analysis and Cost (PACT) data had only recently become readily available, providing a level of detail of what GPs were prescribing that had never been seen before.

Along with this new data had come the Medical Adviser, an FHSA (remember them?) appointment, usually a local GP who was tasked with talking to GPs and practices in order to encourage them to rationalise their prescribing and with it cut prescribing costs. One of the first medical advisers was Dr Steve Head, a long-time contributor to *Prescriber* (and a continuing one – see page 32). It wasn't long before medical advisers had handed over the reins to their pharmacist assistants and the Prescribing Adviser was born.

Looking back at those first issues of *Prescriber* I am struck by the sheer range of drugs that were being promoted to readers. Of the antacids, it was a relatively new drug called omeprazole (Losec) that was exercising the prescribing advisers along with another potential budget buster, simvastatin (Zocor).

The number of new drugs being launched for primary-care conditions was impressive. New drugs today tend to be for more complex and rarer diseases – many have 'mab' at the end. However, they tend to be expensive and there is still a need to rationalise their use, or optimise it as we say today. Drug budgets are always going to be under pressure: in reform after reform they are always the target for some quick-win savings. Looking ahead, value-based pricing of drugs will be the next big challenge for regulators.

Over the last 23 years *Prescriber* has aimed to provide readers with unbiased, authoritative and easy-to-read articles across the therapeutic spectrum and cover the prescribing issues of the day. I am leaving the journal in capable hands that will take it forward and continue to develop it to meet your needs.

I would like to thank all our contributors, board members and staff who have worked on the journal over the years. I would particularly like to thank my consultant editors Dr Chris Manning, Dr Jim Gilleghan, Professor Colin Bradley and Professor Tony Avery and my colleague Richard Crossman who has worked with me on the journal for those 23 years. Last but not least I would like to thank you the reader for supporting us.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

*Tim Dean, editor of Prescriber*