



EDITORIAL

Surgeons, the EJSO and the developing world

We are pleased to publish in this issue of the EJSO a paper from Sri Lanka by Dr Amerasinghe and colleagues, which describes the setting up of an improved breast cancer diagnostic service in collaboration with a team from the Royal Marsden Hospital in London.

For all those of us and our patients who are privileged to lead comfortable and secure lives in stable, prosperous nations, there are many more people living in countries afflicted by conflict, maladministration and economic retardation for whom access is limited to the healthcare resources and standards which we often take for granted. The good which we do for our patients on an individual basis is dwarfed by the scale of suffering and underresourcing elsewhere.

Individual clinicians may feel that these are problems of faraway lands over which we have little influence, and that the huge and impersonal scale and nature of the problems justify avoidance, detachment or at best charitable giving through a third party or agency.

Surgeons can nevertheless have a disproportionate influence on events and perceptions in developing

countries at the personal level, through the building of partnerships with local organisations and hospitals, through the exchange of ideas and personnel, and through moral support. We thus commend the Royal Marsden and Maharagama teams for reminding us of the art of the possible.

Journals of reference are sometimes blinkered in the scope and nature of their published articles. The EJSO is a central and dedicated journal of communication for the community of cancer surgeons, and we are seeking to develop this role alongside our mission to publish the best scientific papers in cancer surgery. We will be pleased to continue to receive papers from whatever source which highlight the social dimension of our work of cancer surgeons, as our small contribution to the improvement of lives everywhere.

David A. Rew
Editor, EJSO

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