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# AFMR's evolution and a tribute to Dr Michael McPhaul

Leticia Ryan,<sup>1</sup> Amir A Zeki<sup>2,3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Johns Hopkins Children's Center, Baltimore, Maryland, USA

<sup>2</sup>Department of Internal Medicine, Division of PCCM, University of California Davis, Sacramento, California, USA

<sup>3</sup>Internal Medicine, PCCM, UC Davis Lung Center, University of California, Davis, Davis, California, USA

## Correspondence to

Professor Amir A Zeki, Internal Medicine, Division of PCCM, University of California Davis, Sacramento, CA 95616, USA; aazeki@ucdavis.edu

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The American Federation for Medical Research (AFMR) was founded in 1940 by Dr Henry Christian, Dean of Harvard Medical School at the time, and was originally named the American Federation for Clinical Research. Dr Christian envisioned a group of physician-investigators that would offer young researchers the opportunity to present their findings to peers while also receiving the guidance of senior scientists.

Nearly 80 years later, the AFMR is one of the longest-running and largest organizations for interdisciplinary medical research in the nation. While evolving to meet the needs of its present-day members, it has remained true to the vision set forth by Dr Christian. With a stated mission to “develop and mentor tomorrow's leaders in medical research,” the AFMR continues to promote opportunities for young scientists to present their research and to foster excellence in the successful development of medical investigators. Now home to two journal publications, the AFMR remains steadfast in its commitment to enhance the training and career development of junior investigators and faculty.

The *Journal of Investigative Medicine (JIM)*, established in 1995, is the official journal of AFMR and is an outstanding platform for our members to disseminate their research. The *Journal of Investigative Medicine - High Impact Case Reports (JIM-HICR)*, established in 2013, is an open access journal and an innovative forum for trainees to publish their high impact clinical case reports. In 2019, the AFMR funded over 150 awards and research projects, published more than 87 original reports in *JIM*, published more than 79 case reports in *JIM-HICR*, and organized four regional scientific meetings (West, South, East, and Midwest), which offered opportunities for approximately 1500 scientific presentations.

Today, the AFMR has a well-established platform to promote education as well as mentoring opportunities for medical students, trainees, and junior faculty through our regional meetings and collaborations with other key professional organizations. The AFMR also supports junior faculty to take on leadership roles, both regionally and nationally. Through these roles, members have the opportunity to develop leadership skills, lead and plan meetings and symposia, as well as interact with colleagues and leaders throughout

the nation. Its multidisciplinary nature distinguishes AFMR from many other scientific associations and provides a unique forum that allows our members and junior faculty to tap into the professional network of colleagues in other academic medical centers as well as other specialties. To continue to thrive as an organization moving forward and meet the needs of “up and coming” scientists, we will continue to build scientific collaborations and expand virtual and social media opportunities. This aligns with our mission to enhance the training and career development of our members and, ultimately, to facilitate the conduct of meaningful research to improve medical care.

So many remarkable and dedicated individuals have contributed to the success of AFMR since it was established. One such individual is Michael McPhaul, MD, who served as Editor-in-Chief of *JIM* over the past 15 years (2004–2019), and created *JIM-HICR* in 2013, serving as its Editor-in-Chief since its inception. Dr McPhaul is Medical Director, Endocrinology and Metabolism for Quest Diagnostics Nichols Institute, based in San Juan Capistrano, CA. Prior to this, Dr McPhaul was Associate Dean for Medical Student Research and Professor of Internal Medicine in the Division of Endocrinology and Metabolism at The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center. During his 25-year tenure at Southwestern, Dr McPhaul acquired an international reputation in the fields of androgen action, diseases of the pituitary, and clinical research and has published extensively, including more than 100 peer-reviewed manuscripts and 23 reviews and book chapters. Since joining Quest as Medical Director for Endocrinology and Metabolism, Dr McPhaul has focused primarily on the development of tools to assist in the comprehensive care of patients with pre-diabetes, the metabolic syndrome, and diabetes mellitus, and the development of new diagnostic tests to permit the early identification of patients with diabetic complications.

Over the course of his 15-year tenure as the Editor-in-Chief for *JIM*, Dr McPhaul successfully navigated a variety of challenges, including the journal's conversion to a web-based manuscript submission system, the transition from a print-based journal to a primarily online format, and the introduction of open access as



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a publication option for authors. With his leadership, *JIM* has continued to thrive, with steady increases in manuscript submissions and impact factor, while remaining dedicated to excellent and constructive peer review so that authors may rapidly publish their important research findings.

From his vantage point as a mentor, faculty member, and editor, Dr McPhaul recognized that while case reports represent an important avenue for trainees and early-stage faculty to demonstrate productive and scholarly activity, publication opportunities were limited. Building on his success with *JIM* and his lifelong commitment to supporting the career development of junior investigators and trainees, in 2013 Dr McPhaul created AFMR's second journal, *JIM-HICR*, to address this key gap. This journal is a peer-reviewed open access journal that focuses on high-quality case reports representing a critical element of investigative medical science and an important avenue for career development.

As Dr McPhaul transitions from Editor-in-Chief to Editor Emeritus for *JIM*, it is an opportune time to recognize his extraordinary contributions to AFMR in this role and express our gratitude for his commitment and dedication. By creating high-quality and accessible opportunities for

publication, Dr McPhaul has ensured that AFMR's journals are the embodiment of our mission to "develop and mentor tomorrow's leaders in medical research." As *JIM* continues on the strong trajectory he set forward, we are excited to welcome Dr Richard W. McCallum as the incoming Editor-in-Chief for the next chapter of *JIM*. It will be an exciting time of innovation and change for the journal as AFMR enters its 80th year in serving the needs of our members.

**Twitter** Amir A Zeki @lungmetabolism

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