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Short-term stability; and a move into the modern era

In this column in January I wrote of the possibility of our imminent demise following the unexpected loss of funding from the Global Health Workforce Alliance. Happily I can report that the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) stepped in and provided some crucial support to ensure that this issue can appear, and discussions are tabled with them for longer-term funding support, as well as with several other donor organisations. Hopefully, stability is not too far away. When writing for the last issue, I wasn't sure whether I should be quite as honest about our predicament, as there is a school of thought which says it is unprofessional to air one's personal problems so publicly, but I felt that if the journal was going to disappear it ought to go down fighting, rather than with barely a whimper.

It was the right decision. Support has come in from all corners, and I hope we'll soon have a firm base to work from.

Meanwhile the new websites are up and running. *Africa Health* is now to be found at www.africa-health.com; and our sister journals are also available on their own sites at www.africanjournalofrespiratorymedicine.com and www.africanjournalofdiabetesmedicine.com. The sites are of course linked. Content is free, and we will hope to add a lot of material in the coming months, making it a valuable portal for busy African health professionals who want a quick route to specific information. Identifying what information to put into the 'Info Centre' is something that is best driven by our readership, so I hope you will be open with your suggestions. It would be good if we could help develop greater connectivity between different African medical and academic

institutions. My sense is that there is a lot of 'grey' unpublished literature out there that it ought to be possible to provide a platform for, rather than leaving it gathering dust – hidden and out of sight.

And so *Africa Health* finally joins the electronic era! I've resisted for a long time and in truth I still remain something of a sceptic given that doctors in the Northern hemisphere are not renowned for going online for their continuing medical education, but I've been persuaded to give it a good try. I'll be fascinated to see how it goes. Today all the talk is of eHealth and its fast growing sibling mHealth (as the power of the mobile phone is increasingly recognised). Huge resources are being attracted to both these options. I can see the potential, I'm just not yet quite convinced that culturally it is a modus of choice for busy health professionals. For sure in time, the electronic route is likely to become a crucial means of communication, I'm just not sure if we've reached that point yet.

The format of a paper journal (pHealth in my nomenclature) still seems to be the favourite amongst those I talk with. But please do prove me wrong by visiting the website and helping us develop it further. *Africa Health* has arrived in the modern era!

All best

Bryan Pearson

