The e-future of the *EMJ*

Delays in the time from submission to publication have become a widespread and almost traditional source of frustration among authors, readers and editors of medical journals. This frustration particularly applies to the correspondence columns where, by the time a letter (and any response by the authors) has been published, many months have usually elapsed and the original article may be partly forgotten. E-developments offer an opportunity to change this. It is planned that all future correspondence for the *EMJ* should be submitted in the form of e-letters, which can be considered and posted on the internet site (www.emjonline.com) within a matter of a few days. The authors of those papers that are the subjects of correspondence will themselves have the opportunity to respond in the form of e-letters. Correspondence that is obscene, libellous, unethical, irrelevant or simply unintelligible will not be posted on the site. In order to achieve rapid turnaround times of submitted e-letters, editing will be kept to a minimum, so the responsibility for proof reading will rest with the authors. Those e-letters that are perceived as contributing substantially to the literature will be published later in the hard copy of the journal.

E-letters may be submitted by accessing the relevant article at www.emjonline.com (non-subscribers will only be able to access the abstract) and using the simple available link for e-letters, which can be found in the box in the top right hand part of the screen. Alternatively,

e-letters may be sent as email to the editor at: emjeditorial@bmjgroup.com. This system for dealing with correspondence has worked well for other journals, most notably, our sister journal, the *BMJ*. It has the potential to inject some fresh vitality and to make it easier for you, the readers, to contribute to your journal. Certainly, early indications from the use of emjonline.com are very encouraging. In its first six months, the site has taken 250 000 "hits" and there has been an increasing amount of e-correspondence submitted. Additional e-developments for the journal are in progress. The Simulated Interactive Management Series has already generated considerable interest. It comprises a pioneering project, which has extended the boundaries of online Continuing Professional Development. In addition, there are also plans to devote some space within the *EMJ* to enable review of relevant web sites. This will assist readers in the difficult task of making the most of a bewilderingly large choice of web sites devoted to various aspects of medicine. Readers who come across potentially interesting web sites that they consider to be worthy of review are invited to send details of their suggestions to the editorial team (preferably by email!).

J P WYATT

Web editor

If you have a burning desire to respond to a paper published in *EMJ*, why not make use of our "rapid response" option?

Log on to our website (www.emjonline.com), find the paper that interests you, and send your response via email by clicking on the "eLetters" option in the box at the top right hand corner.

Providing it isn't libellous or obscene, it will be posted within seven days. You can retrieve it by clicking on "read eLetters" on our homepage.

The editors will decide as before whether to also publish it in a future paper issue.