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FROM THE EDITOR

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Learning the Ropes. First out: meta-analyses

Lars H. Lindholm
Editor, Hypertension News

Dear Member,

In this issue of Hypertension News (Opus 55), we introduce a new section called **"Learning the ropes"**. As the first topic we address meta-analyses (pages 8-13). Today, the number of new, randomised, controlled trials in hypertension is limited, so we often fall back on meta-analyses in our discussions and guidelines. Meta-analyses are, however, not easy to make and interpret and you have to be very careful when doing so. I believe it was Franz Messerli who first said that *"a meta-analysis is like a bouillabaisse, no matter how much fresh seafood is added, one rotten fish will make it stink"*. Stuart Spencer, however, countered with *"a spoonful of port may make a poor French wine drinkable"*. In my interpretation, one really bad trial may totally ruin a meta-analysis, but one really good trial may lift a weak analysis.

We have invited Nadia Khan, Canada and Mattias Brunström together with Bo Carlberg, Sweden – all learned in the field of meta-analyses - to give us two papers from different perspectives, to which I have added a (maybe provocative) example of how difficult it can be when discussing beta-blockers as first-line treatment of hypertension. The new section is introduced by Thomas Kahan from our Editorial Team. We hope that these papers will help you to better understand some of the difficulties involved when making and interpreting meta-analyses.

In the previous issue of the ISH Newsletter (Opus 54), we started a new section called "News, Old News, and Fake News", with a first paper by Stephan Rössner entitled: *It ain't over until the fat lady sings*". We know that many of you opened and liked it. Hence we are now happy to publish a second paper (page 14) by the same author entitled **"I eat what I like and suffer thereafter"**. Stephen Rössner begins his text: *"Martin Luther's health has been discussed extensively by psychiatrists and clinicians over the years – he clearly had a complex psychiatric history of neuroticism and, most likely, a manic-depressive condition, while also suffering from a somatic condition....."*

The May Measurement Month project is now getting ready for its third, hopefully successful year. The project has so far reached 2.7 million

people and has identified over half a million people with uncontrolled hypertension. On page 16 you will find an update on this impressive undertaking by ISH.

The Deputy Editor, Dylan Burger has worked hard improving Hypertension News' distribution data and he has done very well indeed! In his text on page 5, you can see that the number of people who accessed the Newsletter has gone up from 1,385 (June 2018 issue) to a stunning 3,436 (November 2018 issue)! In the table, you can also see how this was achieved. Needless to say, we are delighted and want to thank everyone who has helped. Moreover, in this issue (page 22) there is a more personal "chat" on the use of Twitter in a medical context, by Anastasia Mihailidou.

Finally, it was a sad day, some months ago, when Ms Helen Horsfield told us that she was leaving our Secretariat to move away from London with her husband and son (see the President's thanks below). Helen has meant a lot, not only for Hypertension News but also for the whole Society. A couple of months later, Ms Charlotte Swindall told us that she was leaving too, for a year of traveling in Oceania. Both of them are brilliant ladies and we owe them a lot of thanks for their dedicated work. My life as an editor of Hypertension News has certainly increased after they left.

Have a good read.

Lars H Lindholm, Editor

Lars H Lindholm- lars.h.lindholm@umu.se

MILLION THANKS TO HELEN

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"Goodbyes make you think. They make you realize what you've had, what you've lost, and what you've taken for granted." – Ritu Ghatourey

It is with a heavy heart that I am saying goodbye to Helen Horsfield, who has been at the helm of the ISH Secretariat for so many years. In fact, she started working with the ISH when joining Hampton Medical Conferences in September 2006 – right before the ISH Meeting in Fukuoka – and continued handling our affairs when the ISH moved business to the Conference Collective in April 2014.

Thus, for over 12 years we have gotten used to Helen's friendly face and rapid perfect responses to the ISH Council and members alike. She had indeed become the face of the Society! But with her family moving, we understand the personal circumstances that have resulted in her departure, and therefore I can only wish her all of the very best for the future.

Helen, you became a friend to many over the years - please know very well that you will be dearly missed!

Alta Schutte
President of ISH

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ESH-ISH
2020 Glasgow

May 29 - June 1, 2020
Scottish Event Campus
Glasgow, United Kingdom
www.hypertension2020.org