The eighth issue of *Annals of Alquds Medicine* sees modest presence of research articles: two in epidemiology, a case report in interstitial lung disease and a biography in Arabic of ancient Physicians from the Moslem world who made a contribution in the field of toxicology. For those interested in meetings and conferences, we give a brief account of *Frontiers of Cardio-Vascular Biology 2012* congress, which took place at Imperial College, London.

One critique of the journal that I have heard is that it has a modest impact factor, if any. Whilst this is factual, it is not surprising considering the devastation to Palestine’s infrastructure and resources over the past six decades or so, which made research and publication in the field a second priority. Yet, Palestinian research is promising, despite scarce resources (http://www.biomedcentral.com/1756-0500/6/41). Many Palestinians and their children remain stateless and in some instances, such as in the Lebanon, are forbidden from practicing medicine and pharmacy! This is of relevance to me since I was born in the Lebanon to Palestinian parents and at some stage, whilst a medical student at the Bute Medical School in Scotland, thought of practicing medicine in Beirut.

Making a strong medical journal with a strong impact factor requires commitment, a strong editorial board, a clear editorial vision, reasonable means and an interest for authors to report important and strong research in the journal. *Annals of Alquds Medicine* has several of these ingredients, but not all. There is a strong commitment to make the journal a major player in the field, but resources remain scarce. Many Palestinian authors probably publish in journals from countries they live in rather than in a Palestinian journal that still has limited visibility. Most papers published thus far were in epidemiology and from Gaza. However, persistence and dedication pays and with patience the journal will get there, God willing.

For those interested in furthering their education, a group of American universities (Harvard, MIT, Berkeley and University of Texas) are offering some of their courses for free through the internet, with a certificate at the end of the course for those who pass exams. This is done through the EDX educational initiative (www.edx.org). One course that may be of interest to authors and editors is a 12 week public health course delivered by faculty from the Harvard University School of Public Health. The course is called *Health in Numbers: Quantitative Methods in Clinical Public Health Research*. It teaches the basics of biostatistics and epidemiology and has a series of interesting ‘journal club’ presentations by faculty staff members, as well as tutorials on using STATA. It is currently offered free of charge.

Finally, a project is ongoing to upgrade the journal using Open Journal Systems (OJS), which will enable authors and reviewers to submit manuscripts and/or comments online. The journal will remain open access.

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