The British Society of Echocardiography – a legacy of leadership

The British Society of Echocardiography (BSE) is a professional organization dedicated to the advancement of echocardiography. Founded in the summer of 1990, the BSE has played a pivotal role in the development of echocardiography in the UK. The society has been instrumental in setting standards and accreditation programs that have become benchmarks of competence in the field. As technology has advanced, the BSE has continued to evolve, extending its influence into areas such as echo in intensive care and echocardiography in cardiac anaesthesia.

Echo Research and Practice is a new journal launched by the BSE. This open-access journal aims to provide a platform for research and practice in echocardiography, broadening its reach beyond the traditional academic cardiology department to include contributions from all disciplines where echo is used in routine practice. The journal is particularly interested in submissions that incorporate the role of dedicated cardiac physiologists, who are crucial in the accurate interpretation of echocardiographic scans.

Technological developments have made echo more accessible and practical. The integration of ultrasound technology at the point of care has revolutionized patient care. Training protocols have enabled novices to achieve a high level of competence in interpreting scans, which in turn has improved clinical decision-making. However, these developments also necessitate significant evaluation of technologies, models of practice, and the ultimate clinical outcomes.

The BSE is dedicated to ensuring that submissions to the new journal are not limited to traditional academic avenues, but rather are drawn from a wide range of disciplines where echocardiography is used in routine practice. This will facilitate a more comprehensive understanding of the role of echocardiography in various clinical settings.

By focusing on research and practice, the BSE aims to promote the advancement of echocardiography, ensuring that it remains a cornerstone of modern cardiovascular practice.
While the system known as Modernising Scientific Careers is UK-based (3), the requirement for trainees, scientific, medical or otherwise, to publish primary research is increasing worldwide. It is vital that there is sufficient opportunity in the world literature to receive these data.

There is a relative shortage of international echocardiography literature, and many journals have now broadened to encompass multimodality imaging. While there are many advantages in a joined-up approach between modalities, inevitably those articles that are of primary interest to echocardiographers, as opposed to imaging clinicians, are published in smaller numbers in these journals. Echo Research and Practice has been set up on an open access basis, because the BSE feels passionately that knowledge, freely available, will act as a catalyst to the development of more echo research and, by this, a virtuous circle of ever-increasing knowledge and innovation. This view is in line with the recommendations of the Finch report (4), which stated that a direction of travel towards open access or hybrid journals should be set, particularly when research is publicly funded. Many funding organisations (for instance the British Heart Foundation) insist upon grant-funded research being published in an open access manner (5).

The BSE is rightly proud of its history and this journal is the next chapter. It is the society’s gift to its members, to the world of echo research, but mostly to the patients who encounter this most important technology with an increasing frequency.

References
5 British Heart Foundation. Open Access Policy (available at: www.bhf.org.uk/research/research-grants/managing-your-grant/open-access-policy.aspx)

Received in final form 22 May 2014
Accepted 23 May 2014