Well, it is December already and we present our last issue of the Journal for the year. We also publish a useful supplement for you. Authored by Graeme McIntosh on behalf of Go Grains, it examines the evidence for the relationship between whole grain cereals and fibre consumption and cancer risks. McIntosh concludes that wholegrain cereal foods and cereal foods rich in fibre protect against colorectal cancer and gastric cancer and evidence is mounting in favour of a protective effect for breast, endometrial and prostate cancer.

The Journal contains two extensive review articles prepared by Batterham and colleagues. They bring us up-to-date with the treatment of HIV/AIDS and the implications for the nutritional management of people with this condition. It is encouraging to read of the success with highly active antiretroviral therapy but we additionally learn of the side effects emerging that may require different nutritional strategies. A syndrome of lipodystrophy with wasting of peripheral fat and increases in visceral fat, often accompanied by the metabolic abnormalities of hyperlipidaemia, insulin resistance and glucose intolerance, has been noted to develop in some patients on the antiretroviral regimes, in particular those taking protease inhibitors. The syndrome appears to have similarities to the metabolic syndrome occurring with overweight and obesity. Treatments such as restriction of dietary saturated fat and exercise may be useful to alleviate the biochemical abnormalities. In the leading article, Samaras and Gan caution us that more research will be necessary to assess if our ‘standard’ approaches to treatment for hyperlipidaemia, hyperglycaemia and insulin resistance will be appropriate for this new syndrome presenting in people with HIV/AIDS.

Watson and Watson report on the success of the pilot health claim concerning dietary folate and neural tube defect instituted by the Australian New Zealand Food Authority. There were some increases in knowledge over time but this did not translate into changes in purchase of foods. There was no increase in sales of foods carrying the health claim. As Bower indicates in her leading article, health claims may be best thought of as a means of easily identifying foods rich in folate once the target group has been informed of their existence and the importance of consuming them. Health claims cannot be expected to replace public health education programs.

Our new Associate Editor, tries to entice us to be active in our profession and ignite the passion most of us have had to improve the health of all peoples. We are urged to find new ways to convey our important nutrition messages; equip the population-at-large to adopt them; and make sure we disseminate our innovations to relevant bodies. Our Insight article by Pronk and Collins is an example of such a practice. It reports on an assessment of activities instituted in a local area that were in line with the national strategic plan developed by the National Health and Medical Research Council to address overweight and obesity. They found that all but two of the eight strategies were being actioned.

The retrospective article this issue recounts the birth of food science in Australia. It traces its beginnings and development up to the second world war. It is amazing to see how far it developed in a short time and we look forward to publishing the next instalment in the story by Dr Keith Farrer.

Harmon and Barkess add some further information about the nutrition of children in long day care centres. In their letter, reporting on a sample derived in Perth, they inform us that long day care centres were rarely used as a source of nutrition information by parents. They also found food intakes did not meet Core Food Group recommendations.

Our quiz this month is on vitamin B12. The book reviews may make your Christmas shopping for colleagues a little easier. I wish all the readership and contributors to the Australian Journal of Nutrition and Dietetics the compliments of the holiday season and a happy new year.

Margaret Allman-Farinelli
Editor