

## Letter to the Editor

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Dear Editor,

JMVH ARTICLE: MALARIA OUTBREAK ABOARD  
HMAS NEWCASTLE

As one of its non-corresponding authors, the JMVH article by Rose et al regarding the malaria outbreak aboard HMAS *Newcastle* in June 2015<sup>1</sup> merits further elaboration.

I first became involved with this article on 22 July 2015, when I was asked by the Director Navy Health to comment on a brief from the Director Army Malaria Institute (AMI) regarding this outbreak (the first among seagoing Navy personnel since at least the early 1960's<sup>4,5,6</sup>. DNH's request reflected my role as Fleet Medical Officer (FMO) and the health technical authority for *Newcastle*.

I was not aware of Director AMI's intention to develop his brief into a JMVH article, until I received the first draft (as part of the JHC publishing clearance process) via DGNHS on 24 August 2015. As DGNHS and I both wished to ensure that FHD was appropriately represented in the article, following further discussion with the corresponding author, I became an additional non-corresponding author. As a result, I reviewed the draft article and submitted my revisions in September 2015.

I received the next iteration of the manuscript in November 2015. I noted that parts of the article continued to imply that issues highlighted to FHD as a result of the outbreak remained outstanding, when in fact they had already been addressed at the FHD Medical Allowance List Working Group meeting on 13 July 2015. I amended the draft accordingly for the second time, and resubmitted it shortly thereafter.

The corresponding author emailed me on 14 March 2016, that the article had been cleared by HQJOC and would be published later in the year. When I reviewed the paper again on 10 June 2016, I found that, contrary to my expectations, my November revisions had still not been included. I resubmitted them for the third time the same day.

### References

- 1 Rose, G.L, Westphalen N, Shanks, G.D. Malaria Outbreak Aboard an Australian Navy Ship in the Indian Ocean. *Journal of Military and Veterans' Health* Vol 24 (3), Atg2016, [online], ship-in-the-indian:ocean . 12016, 07 SepN.
- 4 Telecon, CAPT F.J. Parkes RANR, 08 Sep 15.
- 5 Telecon, RADM G.J.A. Bayliss RANR (Rtd), 10 Sep 15.
- 6 Telecon, CDRE M.J. Flynn RANR (Rtd), 10 Sep 15.

On 09 August 2016, the corresponding author advised that the article was out in print. Review confirmed it continued to remain factually inaccurate, in implying that the issues highlighted to FHD as a result of the outbreak still remained outstanding 13 months later. Feedback from JMVH indicated that my March revision was received after the manuscript had been reviewed, accepted, and approved.

On 17 August, I contacted the corresponding author to express my concerns. Although he indicated that the decision not to incorporate all my revisions had been made by JHC and HQJOC, the necessary factual corrections had still not been made. Following a discussion with the Editor of JMVH on 07 September, I was informed that either the online version could be changed with the consent of the other authors, or I could write to the Editor.

As the corresponding author was unwilling to pursue the former, the primary intent of this letter is to highlight FHD's prompt staff work, in producing a non-urgent MAL amendment (among scores of others), once the need had been identified.

In addition, it is requested that the JMVH Editorial Board require concurrence from all future corresponding and non-corresponding authors that their article is ready to be published, on the same terms as I believe applies to other peer-reviewed journals.

In the interests of openness and transparency, it is also suggested that all future JMVH articles that require any form of clearance or other publishing approval process from the author's employer or other agencies be clearly identified as such, as part of the declaration of interest disclaimer process.

Yours sincerely

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