
Editorial

The Four Horsemen

In the Editorial that I wrote in January 2021, I was speculating what the imminent roll-out of the COVID vaccines would mean for Australia and the world. Over the last 12 months, we have seen the successful roll-out of 4 vaccines and vaccination rates reaching unprecedented levels, with rates of over 95% two dose vaccinated, which we have rarely seen in adults in recent times. We have also have seen the rise (and fall) of the Delta variant and the rise of the Omicron variant. Vaccine mandates, public health and social measures, masks, contact tracing, lockdowns and border controls have all had a role to play. As we move into 2022, we look forward towards some sort of normality – the ‘End Game’ of my previous Editorial.

As I write in early March 2022, I am reminded of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, which represent plague, war, starvation and death, in the Christian religion. Perhaps I was in a particularly morbid state of mind, but the invasion of the Ukraine by Russia on 24 February 2022, with its many casualties, attacks on health facilities and mass evacuations in freezing conditions with little food, on top of a pandemic that has already killed over 6 million people, was an inauspicious start to 2022. Combined with the major floods on the East Coast of Australia, where the Australian Defence Force played a crucial support role, 2022 is shaping up to be a challenging year, where all Australians will need to navigate the uncertainties ahead. While I often speculate in my first Editorial of the year, I am loath to do it this time. As military health professionals, we can all expect a challenging year, from the realities of the current



contagion to the possibilities of a worsening global geopolitical situation. 2019 seems a long time ago.

Our first issue of 2022 contains a diverse range of articles from treatment in the field, health and fitness training, and tropical medicine through to women's health and medical specialist training. We continue to attract a good range of articles, including from overseas, but other military and veterans' health articles are always very welcome, and we would encourage all our readers to consider writing on their areas of military or veterans' health interest. We would particularly welcome papers based on presentations given at our 2022 conference, but welcome any articles across the broader spectrum of military health.

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