



New fellowship editor brings social science, medical expertise to *CMAJ*

Dr. Erica Weir, *CMAJ*'s new fellowship editor, is no ordinary medical resident. Weir, a Queen's graduate who came to medicine after a 10-year career as a social researcher, is now in the midst of a double residency in family and community medicine at McMaster University. In choosing her from a field of superb candidates, the selection committee decided that her breadth of experience in social science research, population health and epidemiology would be a boon to the journal. In July, after completing her second year at McMaster, Weir became the journal's second fellowship

editor. Dr. Caralee Caplan, a McGill graduate, was the first. She is now completing a residency in general internal medicine in New York.

Weir, a newly minted family physician who has 3 years left in her community medicine residency, is interested in environmental health, particularly water quality, and the relationship between infectious and chronic diseases. She says the year at *CMAJ* will help hone her appraisal and writing skills. "I will be facilitating research at some point, so this is a great way to understand that role," says Weir, who brings a love of language and literature to the job.

Weir was born in Scotland and her family moved to Moose Jaw, Sask., in 1965, where her father opened a family practice. The family moved to Oshawa, Ont., when Weir was in her teens. At that time she wasn't tempted by medicine; she preferred English and the arts, and earned her bachelor's degree — and the Queen's University Medal in Sociology. She was also awarded a British Council Scholarship to undertake a master's degree in social research methods at the University of Surrey. Afterwards, she stayed in the UK to become a planning assistant in London. Her job was to look at

the relationship between the design of public housing estates and urban riots.

In 1987 she returned to Ontario, where she worked first as a data analyst and then, for 6 years, as a research officer at the Ontario Cancer Treatment and Research Foundation. After working with a senior epidemiologist she became hooked on medicine, and decided to pursue it as a career so that she could better understand the patient's perspective. "Patients' experiences of illness and their view of them will add to my understanding of disease," says Weir, who likes to canoe and bike in her spare moments.

After completing her degree in physical science at the University of Guelph in 1993, she returned to Queen's. In her second year at medical school, she volunteered to work at an orphanage in India run by a Canadian-based group, Childhaven. She had her first major clinical experience there, by providing palliative care to an 11-year-old girl with osteosarcoma. She wrote about the emotional experience in *CMAJ* (1996;155:785-7).

What does her maturity and all this experience allow her to bring to her new career? "Fatigue!" she says with a laugh. "And perhaps a bit of flexibility and patience." — *Barbara Sibbald, CMAJ*



Steven Wharry

Weir: honing her editorial skills

Tuition battle at U of T far from over

The battle over new tuition fees for medical residents at the University of Toronto is far from over, the university warns. Even though first-year residents will not have to pay the \$1950 fee this year because the province has agreed to pick up the tab, it appears that the university has no intention of backing down.

The residents, led by feisty PAIRO (Professional Association of Internes

and Residents of Ontario) President Joshua Tepper, reject the tuition fee outright, arguing that they already save taxpayers millions by staffing Toronto hospitals for less than half the OHIP rate. They also maintain that they save the university "millions" by teaching undergraduate medical students for free. Groups speaking out in support of them have included the CMA and Ontario Medical Association.

The issue was put on hold for a year after the province agreed to pay the fee for first-year residents this year — a move that did not sit well with some observers. Dentist John Mayhall, who chairs the university's Academic Board, told the *U of T Bulletin* that postdoctoral dental students pay tuition fees during their

(Continued on page 479)