

# Welcome to HMPI

David Dranove, Northwestern University

Welcome to *Health Management, Policy, and Innovation*, the official journal of the Business School Alliance for Health Management. The first question that many readers of this journal may have is whether we really need another. There are at least a dozen good health services research and health economics journals, so what makes this one different (and, we hope, special)? The answer may be found in the name of our journal and the name of our sponsor.

As these names suggest, *HMPI* is concerned with health *management*, and for good reason. Management and strategy research suggests that the variation in the performance of firms within an industry exceeds the variation in performance across industries (McGahan and Porter; 1997). Thus, it is possible that steps to improve the performance of the managers of individual firms may be more important than steps to improve the overall performance of their industry.

We see no reason why healthcare should be exempt from this argument. Indeed, there are countless ways in which healthcare managers can improve the performance of their organizations. Amongst many other things, managers must:

- Recruit, supervise, and reward staff
- Organize productive teams
- Invest in the right equipment
- Select and implement integration, diversification, entry and exit strategies
- Price appropriately

Health services researchers tackle many important topics, but management is surely underrepresented. Consider the following:

- Articles that address healthcare management represent fewer than about 20 percent of all articles published in health services research journals such as *Health Services Research* and *Medical Care*
- Healthcare management research represents perhaps 10 percent of all articles published in health economics journals, such as *Journal of Health Economics* and *Health Economics*
- Healthcare management is nearly absent from NBER publications. By our count, there were over 150 NBER Health Working Papers in the past year and half. Of these, only 4 had something to do with healthcare management. By way of contrast, 6 papers addressed the economics of alcohol consumption.

To some extent the dearth of research on health management reflects a dearth of scholars trained in the area. Only some top business schools have health management departments and few of

these departments have their own doctoral students. Most health services researchers, including most health economists, are trained in economics or public policy departments. At the same time, academics want to publish in the types of journals that will advance their careers, mainly journals that are read by their colleagues and have high credibility. We hope that leading academics will read *HMPI* and that our editorial board will assure that we maintain high standards. And we hope that the papers published in *HMPI* will pique the curiosity of researchers and encourage them to study problems in health management.

*HMPI* is also concerned with *innovation*. There is a broad consensus that innovation is the most important long run driver of health costs and quality (Weisbrod, 1991). And there has been excellent research documenting these effects (Cutler, 2005). But there is far less research devoted to the adoption and implementation of technology. Surely we cannot maximize the value of innovation without managing its use.

All health services research and health economics journals routinely publish articles about health *policy*. With our proposed mix of essays and short research papers, *HMPI* may somewhat resemble *Health Affairs*.<sup>1</sup> Suffice it to say that *HMPI* will adopt a different editorial stance.

To sum up, our goals are twofold. First, we want to provide a platform for academics to present their ideas and research on these topics. Second, we want to expose our readers to the academic perspective on important issues in healthcare management, policy, and innovation.

We know what a successful *HMPI* will look like. Several times a year we will publish online volumes containing 5-10 essays and 5-10 short research papers, which will be read by hundreds of academics and thousands of non-academics. If we achieve these goals, then we may expand to include longer research papers within *HMPI* or perhaps a sister journal. But that is a long way off. We can only get there if our colleagues submit their essays and research papers to *HMPI*. We will expedite peer review and, if the papers pass muster, we will expedite publication. Through the obvious feedback loop, *HMPI* will grow.

## References

1. Cutler, D., 2005, *Your Money or Your Life: Strong Medicine for America's Health Care System* Oxford University Press.
2. McGahan, A. M. and M. E. Porter, 1997, "How Much Does Industry Matter Really?" *Strategic Management Journal*, 18: 15–30.
3. Weisbrod, B., 1991, "The Health Care Quadrilemma: An Essay on Technological Change, Insurance, Quality of Care, and Cost Containment" *Journal of Economic Literature* 29: 523-552.

---

<sup>1</sup> *Health Affairs* is my "go-to" journal when a non-academic asks for something that can keep them informed about healthcare policy.