Preface

In Kuwait, over 100 children die each year due to life-limiting or life-threatening conditions, either present at birth or acquired during childhood. These conditions may be prolonged, requiring extensive medical treatment with the prospect of a cure for some, but for others there is only the possibility of managing and alleviating distressing symptoms associated with their disease.

In 2005, the only choice open to those children and their parents was to be admitted to hospital for medical treatment; often this meant to a female adult ward without facilities for children or their families. This situation spurred the Kuwait Association for the Care of Children in Hospital (KACCH) to host the First International Middle East Conference on Paediatric Palliative Care in Kuwait. The conference aimed to raise awareness of professionals and the general public of the needs of this special group of children, and generate support for the development of a comprehensive paediatric palliative care programme for them in Kuwait.

The visiting faculty of internationally renowned experts explored the assessment and management of children's pain and control of symptoms including the use of opioids and non-opioids in children with acute and chronic pain. In addition, the psychological, psychosocial and spiritual issues affecting the child and other members of the family were examined by a number of contributors. The options of the child having treatment at home, returning to hospital or having specialised support in a children's hospice were also considered.

Our local faculty presented several difficult case histories, which were discussed by the panel of experts and

resulted in a lively debate and exchange of ideas. A group of sixth-year medical students from the Faculty of Medicine, Kuwait University, gave a presentation on how children in Kuwait express their pain and how that pain is perceived by their parents and doctors. Their research methodology included using tools such as Wong and Baker's Faces Pain Scale, with guidelines translated into Arabic.

This ground-breaking conference could not pass without a permanent record of its proceedings that would hopefully inspire and motivate professionals and policy makers to work together to establish Kuwait as a centre of excellence in paediatric pain and palliative care. This special issue of *Medical Principles and Practice* stands as a testament to the best practice of paediatric palliative care and a model for us to base our future provision of services for children with life-limiting and life-threatening conditions in Kuwait.

On behalf of the organizing committee, I would like to thank the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce for giving KACCH their superb conference facilities to host this important international conference. I would also like to thank our principal sponsor, The Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS), not only for its sponsorship of the conference, but also for sponsoring the publication of the conference proceedings. In addition, I would like to thank the following co-sponsors: Advanced Technology Company (ATC), Al-Shamel Travel, Bader Sultan Company, Petroleum Corporation (KPC), Commercial Bank of Kuwait (CBK), EQUATE, Mobile Telecommunications Company (MTC), Tanagra, BluGrey

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I would like to express my gratitude to the experts and the authors of the presentations published in this special issue. Be assured that your contributions are valued and an endeavour will be made to put into practice the recommendations and international protocols described in your presentations for the treatment and benefit of chil-

dren with life-limiting and life-threatening conditions and their families in Kuwait. On a final note, I would like to thank the Editor-in-Chief, Editor, Editorial Assistants and staff of *Medical Principles and Practice* who at times had to do extensive editing of some of the manuscripts.

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Organizing Committee
President, Kuwait Association for the Care of
Children in Hospital (KACCH)