

## Introducing PhysiOdyssey

Welcome to the inaugural edition of PhysiOdyssey! We are delighted to bring you this innovative new journal, which we hope will provide a space where physiological science and creativity meet to produce thought-provoking, engaging content.

PhysiOdyssey evolved from a hypothetical zine originally developed as part of Honours courses in Human Biology and Physiology at the University of Glasgow. For many years, final-year students on these programmes have been invited to submit essays for the Garry Prize. This prize was inaugurated in 1980 to celebrate the eightieth birthday of Robert Campbell Garry, who served as Regius Professor of Physiology at the University of Glasgow from 1947 - 1970. In addition to his research, he was a strong advocate for science communication. The Garry Essays have long encouraged a creative approach, asking students to think broadly about the applications of their physiological knowledge.

As we reviewed our core courses, we recognised that many of our students possess a wide range of talents and interests beyond their scientific specialisms. We also believe that creativity is vital to science, not only for generating new ideas but also for expressing and communicating them, both within and beyond the scientific community. Outside of specialist areas, not everyone connects with traditional scientific literature. We wanted to offer something different: a way to explore physiology through narrative, imagination, and artistic expression.

As avid readers, we have both enjoyed ‘learning by stealth’ — absorbing scientific ideas through fiction, storytelling, and popular science writing — although we have sometimes been frustrated by superficial or inaccurate portrayals of science in literature. We began to wonder how we might bring the spirit of unexpected learning into our teaching. That question sparked the idea of a class zine, in which students could explore their understanding of physiology in creative and unconventional ways.

To support the students, we invited a creative writer into our science classroom to share techniques and alternative viewpoints. Students were then invited to write pieces for a zine we named BioOdyssey, a title chosen to reflect the idea of a surprising and adventurous journey through the topics covered in the Human Biology and Physiology programmes. The quality of student work was so high that we felt compelled to bring the zine into a more formal setting, focusing on Human Physiology, our specialist subject. In fact, ‘Leading

Physician Makes Medical Breakthrough’, featured in this edition, won the Garry Prize for Human Biology students this year. Similarly, ‘Withering,’ ‘The Pulse of Emotion’, and ‘Letters Inherited’ were all developed from Garry Essay submissions.

Bringing PhysiOdyssey to life has been a team effort. We are grateful to our editorial team, who found time in their busy schedules to review submissions and help shape the ethos of the journal. Particular thanks go to our two student interns, who have been instrumental in maintaining our social media presence and contributing throughout the editorial process.

We are immensely grateful to all our contributors. Without your creativity and generosity, there would be no PhysiOdyssey. The pieces selected for this first edition set the tone for what we hope will be a vibrant and stimulating journal.

Our journal is especially aimed at students and novice writers. It offers a platform for new voices and a space to step beyond comfort zones, whether by experimenting with a new writing style or exploring physiology from a fresh perspective. We welcome submissions from writers of all backgrounds and aim to make PhysiOdyssey an inclusive space for diverse voices and perspectives. It is not necessary to have a background in physiology to submit - an interest in creative expression on physiological themes is all that is required. However, we do ask that all submissions have a clear physiological focus, and that a short scientific statement is provided to outline the current understanding of the topic. We see PhysiOdyssey as place for development and we are happy to work with contributors to help shape and refine their submissions. We can also provide advice and guidance for preparing scientific statements.

While we are particularly keen to publish narrative formats such as short stories and imagined letters, diary entries, or newspaper articles, we also aim to curate a diverse and inspiring collection of work. This edition includes poetry, and in future issues we would like to include forms such as graphic narratives, and visual art. We will consider any format that brings physiology to life in new and unexpected ways.

To support and inspire writers, we have created a series of writing prompts, available on our website. These are designed to spark ideas and encourage exploration of physiology through creative lenses. Feel free to use these for your own writing practice, or as a starting point for a submission. If you are inspired to contribute, submission guidelines are available on our website.

And finally, to you, our readers: welcome! You are just as important to us as our writers. We hope you find something in these pages that inspires you, sparks curiosity, or encourages you to explore further. Human physiology is, after all, the science of our lives, and it touches every one of us. Ultimately, our goal is to make human physiology accessible, engaging, and

relevant to a broad audience. We want to put some fizz into physiology - hence the ‘bubbles’ in our logo.

Thank you for finding PhysiOdyssey. We hope you enjoy reading this first edition as much as we enjoyed bringing it to life.

**Katherine Price and Shona McQuilken**

**Managing Editors**