

The Wide Reach of Prosthodontics

During the Renaissance it was considered possible to produce, through the power of education, a "complete human being," one who had mastered not only a diverse array of fields such as the humanities, mathematics, science, and the arts and crafts, but also athletics and sport. For example, the many successful achievements of one of the best known Renaissance figures, Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519), included architecture, engineering, music, painting, science, and sculpture, not to mention the more ephemeral activity of court festivities director. Our age has its share of talented individuals, but no one dares claim a complete mastery of the diverse fields a true Renaissance man could rightfully claim to have mastered four or five hundred years ago.

These ideas occurred to me during the last few weeks, when I happened to attend the presentation and defense of several doctoral theses in different scientific fields. I had reason to be present for one dissertation in analytic chemistry and another in theoretic physics; although I fared quite well in science during senior high school long ago, I realized that I was totally ignorant of the current research in these fields.

Dentistry now includes so many specialties that it is practically impossible to comprehend all of them. During one recent week in the Faculty of Odontology, Göteborg University, there were dissertations involving five different fields of dentistry: community dentistry, oral biochemistry, oral microbiology, oral surgery, and periodontology. The theses varied greatly in their aims and materials and methods, ranging from laboratory experiments, animal studies, and clinical investigations on humans to extensive epidemiologic surveys of oral health. The analyses comprised numerous statistical methods, from simple descriptive statistics to multiple and logistic regression. The results seldom lent themselves to simple transfer to the clinical situation, which of course does not mean that the quality of the presented research was poor.

The old question of whether basic or applied research is more valuable can best be answered by acknowledging that both are necessary. However, one of the mentioned theses, which focused on factors influencing the integration and function of implants, wisely concluded that "since there are no direct connections between animal findings and clinical results, experimental results ought to be confirmed in clinical investigations before they are given general validity also in the clinical situation."

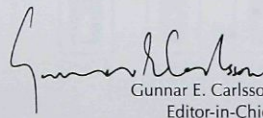
Even in a specialized journal such as the IJP there is great variety in the issues and methods of study presented. All articles published in the journal will not be of interest to all readers, for a variety of reasons. One is that there are very few "Renaissance men and women" today, people

who could grasp the entire breadth of even a relatively limited specialty like prosthodontics. Nevertheless, we find it desirable to publish material demonstrating the wide range of clinical and scientific activity that occupies those in our specialty. New methods of study continue to enter into prosthodontic research and other dental fields, and we should all make an effort to follow the exciting ongoing developments. Although the editorial process attempts to weed out poor information and increase the quality of the published articles, it is the responsibility of the reader to critically evaluate and interpret the material. And clinicians are of course responsible for the careful selection of materials and treatments for their patients, a process that should be based on the best possible evidence.

After these rather serious reflections, it is my pleasure to announce some good news about the journal. The German Society for Prosthodontics and Dental Materials Science (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Zahnärztliche Prothetik und Werkstoffkunde, or DGZPW) has selected *The International Journal of Prosthodontics* as its official journal. The society has appointed the following well-respected colleagues to the editorial board: Prof Dr Matthias Kern, Kiel, as the representative of the DGZPW; and Prof Dr Heinrich Kappert, Freiburg, and Prof Dr Michael Walter, Dresden, as reviewers. We welcome our German colleagues to the IJP and look forward to a long and fruitful collaboration.

For the past several years the Italian edition of the IJP, *La Revista Internazionale di Odontoiatria Protesica*, has published direct translations of the original English edition. A Spanish edition, *Revista Internacional de Prótesis Estomatológica*, has just been started with a slightly different approach. The majority of the first issue consists of translations of selected articles from previous issues of the IJP, but it also contains several original papers by Spanish authors. Prof Dr Jaime del Rio Highsmith, Madrid, is the director of an impressive editorial board representing Spain, Portugal, and seven countries in Latin America. We salute this new journal, which represents the realization of another of the many ambitious initiatives of Quintessence's President, Mr H. W. Haase, to make the results of research and clinical development available to the dental profession worldwide.

The IJP will continue to present a wide range of prosthodontic topics, which will hopefully be within the reach of those interested in following the rapid developments in the field.



Gunnar E. Carlsson
Editor-in-Chief

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