

## My Last Editorial

Scientific journals are thought of as being “new” for long periods of time. In dentistry, this is often the case because so many of the things that we do are new variations on traditional ideas. Sometimes there are new innovations that demonstrate the nuances of the field. My story, in this regard, relates to having been an editor-in-chief for almost two decades. Indeed, this is my last editorial in this journal, and I have to say that I will miss it.

The hardest part of editor succession is that you inevitably find yourself, at the beginning of the assignment, following a leader in the field. Sometimes those leaders are helpful, but this is not always the case. Fortunately, the person who showed me the path for JOMI was William Laney. He was the whole package. By that, one would understand that his knowledge was in many different fields, which included being a researcher, clinician, and teacher. He understood the unique biologic events that were required if osseointegration were to be achieved. He was able to articulate the events that would occur before and during the achievement, and he further understood the events that would be necessary for this bone-to-implant integration to be maintained for much, if not all, of the patient's remaining life. Following him was not easy, but it certainly could have been a much more difficult transition than it was. This statement is an indication of the man that Dr Laney was.

When I came into this position, I had already served in an editorial function for three other journals. I felt like I understood the process, but the process would change. The first appearance of change was in the mechanism of the submission process. The submission and review process went from the old days, where everything was laboriously pieced together, to the more modern times, where the process of journal development would be simplified. Computerization was monumental in this transition.

The first task that was in my way was related to the size of the journal. We had a journal that was expanding in its number of submissions, but the number of accepted articles was unchanged. There was no absolute method that could be used to rectify the situation, other than becoming progressively more restrictive in what was published. More simply, we had more submissions coming in than we could manage. One can address a situation such as this by rejecting more, but if you reject too many, you will soon realize that the submission quality diminishes as authors choose other journals for publication of their work. In addition, being too selective may have narrowed the focus of the journal at a time that the field was expanding, and this could have resulted in a less cutting-edge publication. As the number of submissions increased, we were at risk of losing that special edge that makes a journal successful. By the end of the first year as editor, I realized that the submission rate had climbed very quickly. These new submissions continued with a commensurate increase in the raw numbers of publications but with a decreasing proportion

of publications relative to submissions. On the one hand, this is a bonus, but on the other hand, it becomes a difficult situation relative to the competitive submission/publication rate.

The publisher was able to reduce the font and the weight of the paper to allow publication of more articles without losing the opportunity to continue to publish innovative studies. These were some of the nuts-and-bolts decisions that were made in the changes that occurred over the years. These changes were critical to maintain the sort of innovative journal that I was pleased to see us continuing to provide to the readers. We had the success already with a movement toward computerized layouts of the journal. At this point, we started to wonder if readers might be willing to accept online-only articles, which would move some of the articles to publication only in the electronic sense. Our biggest concern with this originally was that electronic-only publication might not be as desirable to the authors and, ultimately, to the reader. Little did we know that many authors appeared to favor electronic-only publication because it brought their article to an earlier publication date. This brought us up to a nice start, but we had many more things that needed to be done to ensure that this modern technique was matched by modern descriptions.


From there, it was a pleasant pathway that we were able to follow. The field of osseointegration was now opening, which meant that we were seeing newer methods of grafting, and different materials, angles, and positioning of implants, which, interestingly enough, appeared to improve the prognosis once again.

As time has passed, we have seen more and more digital procedures that, once again, resulted in clinical advances. If the 1990s were the decade of many implants, the time since has been devoted to more identification of the minimum number of implants.

With the appreciation that not every patient needs an implant for every tooth, it became clear that new digital imaging would come into play with more ideal implant placement. New diagnostic approaches in the form of diagnostic tooth arrangement went hand-in-hand with positioning of replacement teeth while making use of the best available bone.

We can go on and on, but perhaps it would be time to introduce the new editor of the journal. I'm sure that most of you know Clark Stanford. I'm also sure that Clark will be an excellent new editor-in-chief.

I am happy that I was able to move forward with these experiences. It has been a wonderful journey, and I am quite certain that it will continue to be so for years to come.



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