

# Editorial

## The responsibility is yours

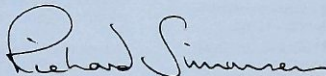
Everyone connected to a health care profession such as dentistry bears a particularly heavy responsibility to be honest with themselves, their peers, and their patients.

- A student pondering the major life decision of whether to embark on the huge commitment of entering the field of dentistry has the responsibility to society to base that decision on a real interest in the health care field, rather than on a personal goal such as financial success. It is true that most health care professionals become financially secure, but if becoming wealthy is the goal, there are better options than the practice of dentistry—and ways that do not raise so many personal conflicts of interest and conflicts with ethical standards.
- Dental students have the responsibility to treat patients, during their dental education, with empathy and concern—to treat them as people needing health care, and not as a means for fulfilling the requirements for graduation.
- Teachers of dentistry in a university have the responsibility to be good role models for their students, to keep abreast of novel and new technology in their field so that they may pass on the latest techniques and theories to students, and not simply act as conduits for irrelevant or obsolete information.
- Practitioners of dentistry have the responsibility to provide the highest standard of dental care while doing no harm to their patients.
- Lecturers at major meetings or at a dental society function have the responsibility to be honest with their audience, to teach and not to preach, to provide, wherever possible, unbiased information, and to disclose any financial affiliation or connection to any product they may be discussing.
- A dental editor bears the responsibility to accept or

reject articles for publication based on their scientific and/or clinical merit and not to accept or deny publication based on personal biases, friendship, or an author's reputation. Furthermore, an editor has the responsibility to take a stand on issues of concern for the profession rather than to sit on the fence and practice political correctness.

- Authors of articles sent for publication to a dental journal have the responsibility to give credit to appropriate sources for the information upon which they are basing the research or the article. Authors also bear the responsibility to earn coauthorship rather than to accept it when it is not deserved.
- Dental products manufacturers have a responsibility to provide safe and effective materials or instruments that will do no harm to dentists, to dental office staff, or to patients.
- A dental manufacturer's sales representative has the responsibility to, at all times, be honest with the customer.
- All leaders in the profession have a responsibility to use their positions to lobby for effective and positive change within the profession; they also have a responsibility, like it or not, to influence those in the profession who may have adopted borderline, or even unethical tactics—for example, the unethical colleague, or the unethical manufacturer whose advertising is dishonest.

Unrealistic? Maybe—but isn't this the way it should be?



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