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## Editorial

### *A Final Word*

It has been very good to see how The International Journal of Paediatric Dentistry has grown and developed over the last 9 years, and how the journal's international profile in both readership and content has become firmly established. Two indicators give evidence of these changes. One is that the number of issues published per year has grown by 50% and the second is that we are now moving towards receiving some 200 papers per year, compared to less than one third this number in 1996. We are already removing some sections to make more space for submitted papers and indeed, editorials are no longer a routine part of each journal issue. However, as this is the last issue for which I shall be formally Editor-in-Chief, it seemed right to have some final say.

The greater size of the journal has meant harder work for many. The move to a formal administration system has been one consequence, but the greater size has, inevitably, also added to the burden on referees, translators and all those involved in journal production. It says much for the esteem in which the journal is held that so many colleagues have been, and are, so willing to give freely of their time and energies.

Papers published in our journal reflect work being carried out and themselves stimulate new work. We have encouraged authors to submit papers from a very large number of countries from all over the world to ensure that IJPD is truly international in scope. I have been disappointed that we have not yet found a satisfactory formula to allow both owner societies to publish abstracts from their respective major conferences as routine, since these would also allow readers to learn something of other new work, often by younger researchers.

Throughout my time as Editor, many people have stressed the importance of achieving an Impact Factor for IJPD. This has been a priority for all the Editorial Team and for the publishers but, despite our best endeavours, it seems significant to me that currently no specialist journal in paediatric dentistry holds an Impact Factor. Achieving one in the future may be as important for the recognition of our specialty as it is for IJPD.

The breadth of subjects considered in the journal pages, ranging from laboratory research to epidemiological studies to case reports, reveals how paediatric dentistry is itself made up of a vast number of different strands. As well as adding to scientific knowledge, I have been acutely aware that many papers published in IJPD are important in promoting understanding of oral health in

children in a wider context. The effects of war, malnutrition and poverty are clear from some of the papers published over recent years, as are the changing patterns of disease resulting from these and other less extreme changes in society. The link between general health, oral health and social conditions has been clearly demonstrated and it has seemed to me that looking beyond the individual tooth, technique, patient or even family, is fundamental if oral health is to be truly understood and benefits achieved for children throughout the world.

Paediatric Dentistry does not stand still and it is important that IJPD changes and develops to meet new challenges. Developments in publishing, new research methodologies and new understandings of disease and health and of treatment modalities will all affect IJPD and its contents. Now the Editorial Team, led by the new Editor-in-Chief, Göran Dahllöf, and in agreement with the two professional societies and the publishers, must decide how to take the journal forward in the coming years. Societies and publishers must support that vision just as they have supported me. I wish my successor and the journal every success and thank all of you, readers, authors, and editorial staff who have enriched my past 9 years.

‘For when this song is sung and past,  
My lute be still, for I have done.’

(Sir Thomas Wyatt, 1503–1542, To his lute)

RD HOLT

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