

## On Short Communications and a New *IJP* Initiative

The title of this editorial is likely to evoke a collective sigh of relief from our readers. After all, brevity of expression is a rarity in discussions on issues of prosthodontic concerns, and I have certainly contributed to the overall windbag index on the topic. However, recent long and sequential editorials (certainly deserved tributes to colleagues or rambling analyses of my predilected discipline's ongoing journey) now demand a change of pace, indeed length, of this page's offering. So I will just take quick stock of how far this journal has come at the halfway point of my editorial tenure, a near fleeting 30 out of the anticipated time frame of 60 months.

Let me begin with the happy admission that this journal is blessed with an outstanding editorial family. Both the associate editors and reviewers are extremely capable, diligent, and committed. They are also very patient, and their polite and compliant responses to my recurrent deadlines and demands remain most gratifying. These are all very busy individuals whose pursuit of scholarship is constantly in high gear; and yet, they rarely fail to provide lucid and sensible advice to our many authors. The results of their expertise can be found in each issue, as manuscripts are "massaged" through the rigors of the review and editing process, yielding highly readable and informative papers. Their unanimous support of my decision to focus the *IJP* on "Management of Patients' Oral Rehabilitative Needs" has proven to be opportune, resulting in the publication of several highly relevant and significant papers. In fact, I am confident that a quick check of the frontrunners from the last 2 years' "Best Articles" competition will confirm this assertion.

Nonetheless, a certain price is paid when a significant change in any journal's direction occurs. In our case, it has been a reduced emphasis on publishing the traditional mainstays of prosthodontic publications, namely technique or materials papers or the prosthetic side of our discipline. Clinical papers have already tended to eclipse laboratory-designed materials studies, but the publication of significant biomaterials research also remains a priority. The short communication in particular has evolved into a convenient and very readable format, which conveys the sort of precise and concise scientific or clinical message implicit in pilot studies, preliminary

investigations, or case history descriptions. In fact, I would suggest that the short communication has caught on quite rapidly, with many recent submissions reflecting the merits and quality of this format.

I should admit that there has also been a downside to this initiative, since some authors have pointed out that their particular university's promotion criteria preclude recognition of what may be perceived as an "abstract-type" publication. I hasten to respond with the reassurance that in this journal, both long and short communications are subjected to the same rigorous review process, and that the number of published words or "space category" does not impact upon a publication's scientific merit. A suitable analogy here would be the length of an invited presentation at a prestigious meeting. Surely promotion committees vetting a candidate's CV would not rank performance on the basis of time allotted to a presenter.

I would additionally argue that the descriptive methodologic rigor and interpretation of results of most clinical investigations tend to demand more publication space, but this is certainly not because they are inherently better papers. They simply require more paragraphs to pose and debate their research question. I hope that support for our dual publication format—long and short communications—continues and that each issue provides stimulating and provocative bimonthly insights into this very eclectic discipline of ours.

The attempt to "personalize" the *IJP*—to expand its remit beyond scientific coverage—has also proven to be very much appreciated. Suggestions have been made that future interviewees be asked to identify key publications that influenced their scientific development, so that a list of "must reads" can be compiled for our readers. Furthermore, the associate editors have also been invited to submit the names of colleagues from around the world whose scholarship has impacted upon both the discipline and the dental profession. I hope that future issues will expand on this initiative and provide an even more comprehensive international recognition forum.

Finally, I would like to announce that the *IJP* and the Institute for Advanced Dental Studies in Karlsruhe, Germany will co-sponsor a teachers' workshop for early-career prosthodontic educators on October 30 to November 1, 2006, in Karlsruhe. A teaching faculty of

leading international prosthodontic educators has been recruited to conduct the workshop thanks to a special grant to the *IJP* from our publisher, Quintessence USA. Efforts are also underway to obtain additional support from other sources. The selected educators agreed to donate their time and expertise to this educational initiative and will conduct a 2-day program for up to 30 participants selected from the international prosthodontic teaching community. The *IJP* sought the Institute's partnership for this program because of its excellent and longstanding reputation in European continuing dental education.

The workshop aims at reconciling best-evidence analyses of clinical information on the efficacy and effectiveness of prosthodontic interventions with the management of selected and assigned clinical scenarios. The latter will take the form of case histories selected and organized as teaching packages for all participants, for pre-workshop distribution. The case histories reflect the broad and eclectic spectrum of challenges that regularly confront prosthodontic educators.

Morning presentations will comprise faculty reviews of background material specific to diverse aspects of the clinical case histories. Afternoon sessions will see participants break into small, tutor-led groups to explore and debate the various treatment options for the case histories in the context of the mornings' reviews. The third and final morning will concentrate on faculty-led scrutiny of the required research and educational protocols related to the exercise of making the best treatment decisions for prosthodontic patients.

This first workshop's mandate was to select participants on the basis of their nomination by a member of the *IJP*'s editorial board. While this may appear to be an inherently restrictive approach to recruiting participants, it is clearly a workable method for this first effort.

Consequently, board members were invited to nominate the suitable, early-career participants from their teaching institutions who would benefit most from this workshop, while some younger members of the *IJP*'s editorial family chose to attend themselves. The preferred pedagogic *modus operandi* for the workshop demanded a limited attendance of up to 30 participants, and the selection was made on the basis of a combined broad geographic distribution and a draw.

I will co-chair the Karlsruhe workshop with Michael Henners, Director of the Institute for Advanced Dental Studies in Karlsruhe. The European faculty presenters/tutors will be John Hobkirk (United Kingdom), Nico Creugers (Netherlands), Ignace Naert (Belgium), Francesco Bassi (Italy), Regina Mericske-Stern and Nicola Zitzmann (Switzerland), and Winfried Walther (Germany). The North American presenters/tutors will be Pierre de Grandmont (Montreal), Shane White (California), Aaron Fenton and Asbjørn Jokstad (Toronto), Sreenivas Koka and Steven Eckert (Rochester), and Michael MacEntee (Vancouver).

This will be the first of hopefully future biennial workshops that are envisaged to take place on different continents and run by different groups of tutors, so as to ensure the maximum scope of attendance by interested clinical educators. Many obstacles will of course have to be overcome to ensure the viability of this endeavor on an ongoing basis, with financial support remaining the major concern. The Karlsruhe workshop is only a first effort, a trial run that is very much an *IJP* initiative at this stage. However, it is hoped that other organizational or industrial support will be forthcoming to ensure that the project will survive and prosper.

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