

Features Section

Editorial

'Journal of Orthodontics'—a Change of Outlook

This, the first issue of a new century, marks the commencement of the 'Journal of Orthodontics'. However, this is not a new journal but rather an evolution of the old one into a new format for the 21st century. When I took over the British Journal of Orthodontics in 1996 I became editor of a journal with a significant history—the last issue (December 1999) completed Volume 26 of a continuous quarterly series. Of course, prior to that, its predecessor—'Transactions of the British Society for the Study of Orthodontics' had been publishing scientific articles, presented at meetings, since the establishment of the society at George Northcroft's home in 1907. It was in 1973 that the journal was renamed, becoming the BJO and so, bearing in mind the timing of the current launch, perhaps we should review the status of the journal and relaunch it every quarter of a century or so!

In truth, in any business, and the journal is now at least in part a business, performance reviews need to form part of an annual planning cycle. Such a review should look at the original strategy, to confirm progress towards aims, and should form part of the agenda of the annual round of management meetings. When I first applied for the post of editor at the end of 1994 I presented a written strategy to the appointment committee. My current five-year plan concludes with the launch of this rebadged version of the journal but the gradual changes that have occurred along the way have always been with a view to the production of this issue. Therefore, no startling differences in presentation between December 1999 and March 2000 should be apparent. However, there is a change in outlook . . .

The last few years have seen the journal achieve an ever-increasing international profile within the speciality of orthodontics. Its readership has greatly broadened whilst the office receives papers and articles submitted from clinics, offices and academic departments from around the world. As I discussed in my last editorial, it is to reflect this increasing international emphasis that we have changed the name and, over the last few issues, have gradually altered the presentation of the content. Since the change in name is part of the process of evolution of the journal—the numbering of the volume sequence will continue on from previous.

So how will the Journal of Orthodontics be run during the early 2000's?

Well for the moment it will continue to have its editorial leadership and offices based in Wales, UK. However, please note that the address has changed—the journal has its own office within the Dental School building in Cardiff. Also note that the telephone and fax numbers have changed and that there is an extra e-mail address available. The latter has been established to provide a 'back-up'

system, since there have been some technical problems with access to our current e-mail since our office move. I would advise copying all e-mail messages to the new address.

With regard to the operation of the journal office, it will run in a similar manner to previous. As an example, all papers on submission will be acknowledged and, where a clearly established theme is identifiable, will be overseen for the refereeing process by a member of the board with a broad expertise in that area of subject matter. Could I stress at this point the importance of submitting three copies of the paper—not following the guidelines can only delay the progress of the paper. All scientific papers will be refereed by a minimum of two experts but will often be reviewed by three persons (in addition to the Editor and, where necessary, the statistical advisor). For further advice on dealing with the office or submitting material please read the guidelines to contributors at the back of this issue—again there have been some changes and updating of these instructions!

The Editorial Board concerns itself with the quality of the content of the journal and again this has been re-organised with some changes, particularly in the international membership. In the JO, as was previously the case in the BJO, this is very much a 'working board' and is constantly subject to review to be sure that we meet the needs of our readership and author-base. There is a small editorial board 'executive' for dealing with 'day-to-day' issues of content. The journal layout will, for the moment, follow the recently established format:

Clinical Section—This publishes high quality clinical material. It often leads with prize or award winning cases. It includes the opportunity to present unusual clinical problems and treatments. There is a basic format for the presentation of this type of material. All of this section is published in colour.

Scientific Section—This is the heart of the journal presenting high quality, well presented research material from around the world. Usually the research will be of direct relevance to the practice of orthodontics although this won't always be the case. Occasional educational or scientific review series are commissioned, although subject to the usual referring process. Again, colour is available, free of charge, in the scientific section and I hope that authors will take advantage of this opportunity in the presentation of their work.

Features Section—This part of the journal is designed to provide a service to the speciality as a whole. It publishes information and material designed to inform and update the international orthodontic community. A regular review

of the dental literature is presented to highlight areas of interest to orthodontists. Included in this section is a review of a large number of orthodontic journals from around the world—the office is always pleased to receive regular copies of national orthodontic journals for inclusion. Books and appropriate theses are also reviewed from time to time. This section also has special features targeted at those clinicians working mainly in specialist practice, or in the hospital or university environment. Material for this section is welcomed from around the world and should be of international relevance.

A flavour of what we are trying to achieve within the journal should become apparent on reading this current issue.

There is also access to the Journal of Orthodontics via the World Wide Web, presented in HTML format (including colour). All issues of the journal are available via this route to current subscribers (using the journal subscription number on the mailing wrapper). Non-subscribers may visit the site to view sample copies etc. A proper journal archive is planned on the web for 2000. The location of the journal on the web is: **www.ortho.oupjournals.org**

The journal continues to be supported by the British Orthodontic Society and is published on their behalf by Oxford University Press. An editorial Committee oversees the 'business' of the journal. This is chaired by the Editor but otherwise has no common membership with the

Editorial Board. This is a deliberate ploy to separate the 'business/management' and 'editorial/administrative' functions of the journal.

This journal is intended to be a dynamic vehicle to update and inform the orthodontic community—it will be subject to a process of review, change and evolution in response to the needs and views of its readership. All comments and suggestions are welcomed and over the last few years the development of an active 'letters page' has been welcomed. I would like this to continue into the Journal of Orthodontics. As well as giving a rapid route for commenting on published material, or important issues within the speciality, it also provides a quick means of presenting a short case report, in colour, within the journal.

Finally, may I confirm my commitment to making this journal an international success as we enter the next millennium. However, any scientific journal is only as good as the material submitted—as Editor in Chief I look forward to receiving articles and papers from around the world so that this journal can achieve its aim of presenting a true international reflection of this fascinating speciality of ours!

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