

Features Section

Editorial

Journal of Orthodontics—Continuing the Development



This is my first editorial as the new editor of the Journal of Orthodontics and I see this role as both an honour and an exciting challenge. The Journal has a long and distinguished history and I would like to acknowledge the major contribution made by the previous editors; Dick Mills, Bill Houston, Barry Leighton, Lawrence Usiskin, Ray Edler, and the most recent editor Malcolm Jones. I am conscious that I follow in the footsteps of some of the most eminent figures in British orthodontics.

My predecessor Malcolm Jones has made great strides in increasing the clinical content of the journal and yet he did this by also maintaining a strong scientific base. Malcolm also recognised the importance of increasing the international profile of the Journal. This is perhaps the greatest challenge facing the Journal at the beginning of the new millennium. The changes Malcolm has put in place are already making the Journal more appealing to an international audience. My editorial team and I are determined to continue to address this challenge.

I have given considerable thought to how we can achieve this. We have approached this from the point of view of both our readers and our contributors. This has resulted in a decision to maintain the strong clinical content of the Journal by encouraging clinical reports and product updates that have international contributors and relevance.

A core aim of all clinical journals is to help to improve the quality of care that we provide for our patients. As the Editor I am acutely aware of this responsibility and the importance of ensuring that the highest scientific standards are maintained in the papers that appear in the Journal.

It is now well recognised that in influencing clinical practice properly designed prospective studies provide clinicians with the most reliable information. However, retrospective and observational studies do have an important role to play providing the authors acknowledge the biases that may be present and discuss the results with due consideration to the limitations of the study design. Another development that I am considering is the inclusion of summaries and commentaries of the papers provided by authorities in the field. This will, hopefully, encourage discussion and encourage readers to study the whole published paper; if it is of interest to them.

What about potential authors? My feeling as an author is that I would like to receive a quick, constructive and helpful response to my efforts. In order to achieve this I am going to investigate using electronic communication to allow rapid forwarding of papers to referees, and emailed referee's reports for consideration by the editor and returning to the authors. Furthermore, I will not merely dismiss a publication without providing comments that are aimed to be helpful to the author. This has not been a characteristic of my predecessors but I have been on the receiving end of destructive comments from other journals that have only served to discourage.

Finally, I am looking forward to joining together with the editors of other orthodontic journals to take part in the wider community of academic orthodontics and continue to make progress with the Journal of Orthodontics over the next five years. It will be hard work, but it should also be fun.

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Editor in Chief
Journal of Orthodontics