

The Journal of the American Osteopathic Association: The Next Generation

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In January 2014, I assumed the role of editor in chief of the American Osteopathic Association (AOA). I follow 13 prior editors in chief in the 113-year history of *The Journal of the American Osteopathic Association (JAOA)*. Each has left his footprint, advancing the scholarly mission of osteopathic medicine. Under the tenure of Gilbert E. D'Alonzo Jr, DO, *The Journal* not only enhanced its scholarly activity but received a facelift and some major reconstructive surgery. New sections such as "Evidence-Based Clinical Reviews" and "The Somatic Connection" have expanded the *JAOA's* reach and visibility. Like the life-altering and -enhancing work I witness every day by our team in Mayo Clinic's transplant center, I envision a transformation of the *JAOA* into something even more valuable.

How do I envision our journal's evolution? Journals evolve in the context of the times. Osteopathic medicine is undergoing a period of enormous growth. By 2020, 1 in 4 students in US medical schools will become an osteopathic physician,¹ and more than 100,000 osteopathic physicians will be in active medical practice.² This growth presents enormous opportunities and challenges for our profession. Indeed, the entire practice of medicine is unlikely to look the same to our future graduates, and we need to prepare them for these changes.

Information technology continues to empower decision making, and the brick and mortar models of health care delivery are likely to go the way of retail stores and print news. Health care knowledge and delivery will be transferred by new models and new payment systems. These alterations in health care structure and function will create opportunities to demonstrate the value of osteopathic medicine, and the *JAOA* will publish the work that addresses these changes. As the AOA and our academic centers increase their investment in scholarly research, the *JAOA* should witness more high-quality original research manuscripts, which we will seek to

publish in a cautious but efficient manner while ensuring that the science is accurate. We will seek expert commentary to review papers of clinical significance to our readers and the public. *The Journal* will engage medical students, residents, mid-level practitioners, practicing physicians, and academicians by seeking out papers relevant to their interests. Our editorial staff will reach out in an ambassadorial role to inspire more engagement in peer review and to encourage specialists to share their expertise with the *JAOA*. By building these relationships, we hope to establish a long-term connection to our audience.

Like a fine restaurant, we will introduce new items to our menu. There will be appetizers, complements, main and side dishes, and desserts, which can be viewed à la carte or as part of the full-course menu. Like a good restaurant, we hope to create enough interest and value that you will look forward to your next visit. We hope to ignite the scholarly flame that led each of us into osteopathic medicine.

Our osteopathic tenets will be at the forefront of the *JAOA*, as they define and guide our mission. My goal is for all types of papers submitted to our journal to reflect these tenets. We will continue to accept case reports, but rather than merely being a unique case, these submissions should reflect 1 or more of the tenets. We will continue to support the evidence-based clinical reviews. Students and residents will be invited to share their unique experiences. We will grow our section on medical education in partnership with the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine by focusing on what is unique about our osteopathic medical training.

We will continue to encourage the submission of articles that reflect on our heritage as tools to envision our future. Patient perspectives on osteopathic medicine will be welcomed. We will encourage authors to submit their scholarly works describing mind-body-spirit interaction. Papers describing the

host's self-regulatory mechanisms, interplays of immune function, and advances in regenerative medicine will also be welcomed. We will seek papers describing structural alterations that impact function ranging from alterations in molecular structure to the musculoskeletal system to the structure of society and their impact on health.

The mission of the *JAOA* is to advance medicine through the timely publication of peer-reviewed osteopathic medical research. We will not strive to reproduce the work of other medical journals but will focus on our osteopathic values and what makes us distinctive. *The Journal's* focus will be inclusive of our profession and reflect our generalists, our specialists, and our experts in osteopathic manipulative treatment.

How will we accomplish these bold tasks? It will require everyone's engagement—from students, postdoctoral trainees, practicing physicians, academic medical centers, researchers, administrators, and innovators. As we develop a culture of scholarly activity, the *JAOA* will be its reflection.

I am excited to work with all of you and a stellar team of publications staff to realize this vision. (doi:10.7556/jaoa.2014.065)

References

1. Educational Council on Osteopathic Principles. *Introduction to Osteopathic Medicine for Non-DO Faculty*. Chevy Chase, MD: American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine; 2010.
2. *Osteopathic Medical Profession Report*. Chicago, IL: American Osteopathic Association; 2013. <http://www.osteopathic.org/inside-aoa/about/aoa-annual-statistics/Documents/2013-OMP-report.pdf>. Accessed April 3, 2014.

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