

ENGAGE Initiative: Showcasing Osteopathic Scholarly Activity

Robert Orenstein, DO

Dr Orenstein is the editor
in chief of the American
Osteopathic Association.

From the Infectious Diseases
Department at Mayo Clinic
in Phoenix, Arizona.

Address correspondence to
*The Journal of the American
Osteopathic Association*,
142 E Ontario St,
Chicago, IL 60611-2864.

E-mail:
jaoa@osteopathic.org

The *Journal of the American Osteopathic Association (JAOA)* is a vehicle for the dissemination of osteopathic scholarly work. Since 1901, *The Journal* has strived to reflect the vibrancy of scholarly activity in osteopathic medicine. Our monthly electronic tables of contents are received by more than 100,000 clinicians and scientists, and we have been experiencing growth in numerous areas. Our audience is principally generalist physicians, but our media reach is global. In the past year, many of our articles have been picked up by large media outlets and viewed by millions.¹⁻³

Likewise, the osteopathic medical profession has been experiencing dramatic expansion. Currently, 30 colleges of osteopathic medicine (COMs) are operating in 42 locations.⁴ Compared with the 2005-2006 academic year, total enrollment for the 2015-2016 academic year has nearly doubled to more than 26,000 students, and in 2015, 5323 new osteopathic physicians graduated, compared with 2708 graduates in 2006.⁵ This growth has led to an expansion of graduate medical education (GME) training positions and a continuous infusion of osteopathic graduates into Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education training programs.⁶ As American Osteopathic Association programs become part of a single GME accreditation system, osteopathic graduates will require research and scholarly writing skills to remain competitive.

In my experience, a common criticism of COMs is that they lack research capacity and function only as “trade schools.” Clark and Blazyk⁷ examined the number of osteopathic peer-reviewed publications and National Institutes of Health grant funding and concluded that COMs lag far behind schools of other health care professions. The shortage of academic productivity may result from a lack of protected time, investment of research dollars, a clear research mission, and faculty training and mentorship.⁸

Perhaps the rapid growth of COMs dilutes these resources in efforts to train more DOs for clinical practice. Yet, the expansion of COMs and GME programs and a new primary care workforce presents a huge opportunity for scholarly activity.

We have heard criticisms that the *JAOA* only publishes research related to osteopathic manipulative medicine and that researchers involved in the basic and translational sciences have not been welcomed to publish. We’ve also heard that faculty at COMs aren’t conducting research. However, we know that there are outstanding basic scientists, clinicians, and educators at these schools who would like to disseminate their work to a broad audience. Therefore, to dispel these myths and engage more faculty and students in scholarly writing, the *JAOA* created its ENGAGE Initiative. In November 2014, the *JAOA* reached out to every COM in the United States to give each school an opportunity to showcase who they are, what they do, and how they are preparing the next generation of the US health care workforce. We invited basic scientists to submit papers that review the body of their work and how it impacts human health. We invited those involved in education to submit manuscripts describing the innovative work they may be doing in the education of health care professionals and teamwork in medicine. We invited clinicians to share their reviews while citing the best evidence in their fields. Faculty at a number of COMs have accepted these invitations.

In this issue, we introduce the *JAOA*’s first installment of the ENGAGE Initiative with articles from the Ohio University Heritage College of Osteopathic Medicine.⁹ We hope our readers find this work and future ENGAGE installments inspiring, and we hope these articles will engage faculty and students at other COMs in our endeavor to showcase the exciting scholarly activity in osteopathic medicine. (doi:10.7556/jaoa.2016.054)

References

1. Woodfield J. Lifestyle intervention programs improve health of prediabetes, type 2 diabetes patients, study finds. *Diabetes.co.uk*. February 2, 2016. <http://www.diabetes.co.uk/news/2016/feb/lifestyle-intervention-programs-improve-health-of-prediabetes,-type-2-diabetes-patients,-study-finds-99873063.html>. Accessed March 31, 2016.
2. Feller S. Postoperative pain relief method may impact knee replacement recovery time. *UPI*. November 30, 2015. http://www.upi.com/Health_News/2015/11/30/Postoperative-pain-relief-method-may-impact-knee-replacement-recovery-time/4831448910538/. Accessed March 31, 2016.
3. Schumaker E. Food insecure children are more likely to be obese. *The Huffington Post*. September 9, 2015. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/food-insecurity-linked-to-child-obesity_us_55eefd6be4b03784e276821b. Accessed March 28, 2016.
4. Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation. Colleges of osteopathic medicine. American Osteopathic Association website. <http://www.osteopathic.org/inside-aoa/accreditation/COM-accreditation/Documents/current-list-of-colleges-of-osteopathic-medicine.pdf>. Accessed April 1, 2016.
5. *Trends in Osteopathic Medical School Applicants, Enrollment, and Graduates*. Chevy Chase, MD: American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine; 2015. <http://www.aacom.org/docs/default-source/data-and-trends/2016-trends-COM-AEG.pdf?sfvrsn=52>. Accessed April 1, 2016.
6. Martinez B, Biszewski M. Appendix 1: osteopathic graduate medical education. *J Am Osteopath Assoc*. 2016;116(4):256-262. doi:10.7556/jaoa.2016.050.
7. Clark BC, Blazyk J. Research in the osteopathic medical profession: roadmap to recovery. *J Am Osteopath Assoc*. 2014;114(8):608-614. doi:10.7556/jaoa.2014.124.
8. Degenhardt BF, Standley PR. 2013-2022 strategic plan for research: a role for everyone in promoting research in the osteopathic medical profession. *J Am Osteopath Assoc*. 2013;113(9):654-659. doi:10.7556/jaoa.2013.029.
9. Nottingham KL, Rush LJ, Bevery EA. Building primary care research capacity in a college of osteopathic medicine. *J Am Osteopath Assoc*. 2016;116(5):278-279. doi:10.7556/jaoa.2016.055.

© 2016 American Osteopathic Association

Electronic Table of Contents

More than 110,000 individuals receive electronic tables of contents (eTOCs) for newly posted content to *The Journal of the American Osteopathic Association* website.

To sign up for eTOCs and other announcements, visit <http://jaoa.org/ss/subscribe.aspx>.