EDITORIAL

Changing of the guard: A look at the past

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With the December 2010 issue of the *American Journal of Orthodontics and Dentofacial Orthopedics* (AJO-DO), David Turpin’s role as Editor-in-Chief comes to a highly successful conclusion. Over a year ago, Dave informed the American Association of Orthodontists that he had decided to step down from a position that he had held for over 10 years. For those of you who have worked with him during the past decade, I am certain that this news was a bit depressing. After all, Dave Turpin has really been responsible for advancing the reputation of the AJO-DO substantially, not only in North America but throughout the world.

Over the past 10 years, he grew the reputation of the AJO-DO into one of the most prestigious orthodontic journals in the world. As editor, he gave 32 presentations in 15 countries and has proudly spread the word about the AJO-DO. His international interaction with orthodontic researchers, academicians, and clinicians from around the world led to the unbelievable growth in the list of manuscript referees. In 2000, he drew from a pool of about 200 referees, primarily from the United States. In 2010, the current list of regular manuscript referees is over 500. These referees ensure that what is published in the AJO-DO is of the highest scientific quality. Dave Turpin is solely responsible for enticing these referees to maintain their relationship with the AJO-DO.

Another figure that has increased substantially in the past 10 years is the number of article submissions. When Dave assumed the reins of the AJO-DO in 2000, the average number of manuscripts submitted was about 300 per year. In 2010, the AJO-DO received over 900 submissions from around the world. Of course, the advances in electronic communication have facilitated and streamlined the submission process for all scientific journals. But I wonder how many orthodontic journals have the quantity and the breadth of submissions that the AJO-DO enjoys today, thanks in large part to the efforts of Dave Turpin.

With the submission of significantly more manuscripts, there can be a backlog of manuscripts awaiting publication. This is a big problem for any journal, but is a greater problem for authors who want their material published in the best journal in the shortest time. Dave Turpin was well aware of this potential problem and provided 2 solutions. With the growth of electronic journalism, he encouraged authors to publish their entire manuscript online, with an abbreviated version appearing in the printed copy of the AJO-DO. This method has become successful, and at least 6 articles per issue are online-only articles. This allows authors to have their material published in as little as 6 months. This has been so popular that today most researchers prefer this option to the traditional printed version. Dave Turpin facilitated this process for the AJO-DO.

The second method of minimizing the backlog of manuscripts is to maintain the highest level of quality for articles that are accepted. Over the past decade, the acceptance rate for manuscripts submitted to the AJO-DO has steadily decreased from 1 of every 2 articles in 2000, to 1 in every 4 in 2010. This translates into a rejection rate of about 70% to 75%. In this way, the readers of the AJO-DO are exposed to the best research from orthodontic programs and research laboratories around the world. Dave Turpin and his many outstanding referees have been responsible for ensuring the quality of the articles that appear in the AJO-DO.

But the legacy for which Dave Turpin should be most remembered is his steadfast commitment to evidence-based research. When he has appeared on lecture programs around the world, his message usually centers on the importance of elevating all research to a higher level, through an understanding of the hierarchy of evidence-based research. As a result, he has given the highest priority to articles that describe randomized clinical trials and systematic reviews.

So, the next time you see Dave at a meeting, be sure to thank him for his years of service to the AJO-DO and for making your journal into the world-class publication that it is today. I know that I have very big shoes to fill.

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