

Editorial

In April this year I had the pleasant duty of attending the International Journal Editors' Symposium. The Symposium was held in Chicago as part of the 100th Annual Session of the American Association of Orthodontists, the 2nd Meeting of the World Federation of Orthodontists (WFO) and the 5th International Orthodontic Congress.

The Symposium was attended by thirty-one of approximately eighty editors of orthodontic journals throughout the world. There were three sessions, dealing in turn with the questions of multiple article submissions and notification of authors, journalism on the internet and the impact factor (in rather simplistic terms, the "impact factor" relates to the number of times an article in a particular journal is cited in the literature). A summary based on reports from the leaders of the discussions of the three questions has been published by the World Federation of Orthodontists and is printed in its entirety below.

It was my responsibility as the leader of the discussion on the submission of articles to more than one journal to summarise its content. The discussion was led by way of the following questions:

Should there be a posting site on the web where the journal editors submit the title and authors of manuscripts received?

Should these web sites include the backlog information for every journal?

Guidelines for manuscript preparation vary from journal to journal and the questions asked were: Should these guidelines be uniform—especially for references? Should there be a universal effort to encourage evidence-based clinical article submissions?

It seems that the motivation for multiple submissions is to increase funding for research and administration of orthodontic departments, and/or the need of the author to increase the size of his or her C.V. Whilst on the discussion of funding, one of the participants mentioned that journals are under either commercial or academic and specialised society funding, or a combination of both. The editor's role is to be as independent as possible, but at least be aware of who finances the particular journal. Is there enough copy to keep journals publishing? Most

editors said they were receiving sufficient copy; one said there was not enough. Some journals solicit articles; for example, of work of a specialist nature or from international sources.

With regard to the issue of a posting site to declare titles and authors before publication, most opposed this suggestion, but agreed to posting on a web site after acceptance of the article. This would enable the other editors to be aware of forthcoming publication.

How many have web sites? These will be published in the WFO Gazette.

Should web sites contain backlog information? Only one journal does this, and that is our journal. I stated that we publish received and accepted dates—most agreed that short acceptance times would encourage submissions.

How much time do journals allow referees to work on articles? The answers varied between six weeks and three months; a major revision, however, might take up to six months.

Should guidelines for manuscript preparation be uniform? The Vancouver style of referencing seems to be uniform. There was disagreement regarding whether or not guidelines should be uniform. The size of abstracts was discussed, with the suggested acceptable range being between 200 and 400 words.

With regard to electronic printing: Mosby has published guidelines for resolution of photographs. Powerpoint is not acceptable; however, the printer of the journal can specify the resolution of the images required.

The second question regarding guidelines concerned evidence-based clinical articles. Discussion included the need to identify problems in treatment and that research should help the practitioner. Clinical reports were favoured over basic research; however, prospective studies were acceptable. One delegate suggested that a biostatistician should be involved in a research project before the research commences, not after.

I met some of the representatives of Oxford University Press during the two days that I was at the Symposium and they outlined for me the functions of a publisher, some of which included marketing. I feel that a publisher

could provide some services to our journal in that particular area as well as in other ways. I shall contact them for advice, and also ask our own printer if there is any way in which they could assist us.

The question of impact factors was discussed widely, with most editors being reassured that they need not be intimidated by a lack of an ISI listing, as this does not necessarily imply low standards. Only two orthodontic journals of a total of eighty have an ISI rating. "ISI" refers to Institute for Scientific Research, which is a database publishing company that provides comprehensive coverage of the world's most important and influential research conducted throughout the world. It covers 16,000 international journals, books and proceedings in the sciences, social sciences and arts and humanities. Its indices complete bibliographic data for every item covered, including English-language author abstracts, author and publisher addresses, as well as the cited references of every journal. It claims to provide a comprehensive coverage, but maintains that "comprehensive" does not necessarily mean "all-inclusive". (This information is extracted from an essay: *The ISI Database: The Journal Selection Process*, by James Testa, Senior Manager, Editorial Department, Publisher Relations, ISI.)

The meeting was most helpful, not only to be able to share experiences of common problems but also to become aware of the procedure and costs of going "on line", and to put a face to the names of editors with whom I have communicated only verbally or electronically.

Brian W. Lee
Editor

Summary of the proceedings of the first International Orthodontic Editors' Symposium, Chicago, April 2000

An historic meeting of orthodontic journal editors was held in Chicago under the sponsorship of the World Federation of Orthodontists (WFO) in conjunction with the 100th American Association of Orthodontists Annual Session, the 5th International Orthodontic Congress and the second meeting of the WFO. The purpose of the symposium was to explore means of elevating the standards of orthodontic journalism. The editors discussed standardisation of article preparation and submission practices, and explored the present and future potential of internet journalism. Ways to reconcile the attention paid to the impact factor and the need to disseminate information were also debated.

The Manuscript

Manuscript submission

Submission of an article, already published in a local-language journal, to a mainstream English-language international journal is a particular problem. This

practice causes a number of concerns, copyright problems perhaps heading the list. The conference recognised that some research would never be available to academics if it is not published, in some form, in the English language. Thus, an exchange of English-language abstracts among journals can be a useful practice. A "kiosk" section in all orthodontic journals where these English-language abstracts are displayed could be useful. To combat the practice of submissions to multiple journals, a secure web site, accessible only to editors, will be constructed. This WFO-sponsored web site will allow the postings of accepted articles by the editors. The standardised format will include the title, all authors and, ideally, a structured abstract.

Manuscript preparation

Currently, manuscript preparation guidelines are unique to the particular journal. Standardisation, therefore, might abolish innovation and individuality. There are areas, however, where standardisation makes sense, particularly in the references section. A widely used set of standards can be found in: Iverson C, Flanagan A, Fontanarosa PB, *et al.* *American Medical Association Manual of Style: A Guide for Authors and Editors*. 9th ed. Williams & Wilkins, a Waverly Company; 1997. To order: In U.S.A. call (800) 638 0672 or fax (800) 447 8438. In Canada call (800) 665 1148 or fax (800) 665 0103. Outside U.S.A. and Canada call (410) 528 4223 or fax (410) 528 8550.

The nature of manuscripts

The conference recognised that there is a worldwide problem in the allocation of adequate resources to support prolonged clinical trials research in Orthodontics; however, the problem of commercial interests overriding science was a concern. Editors strongly encourage submission of manuscripts reporting on evidence-based clinical research. The editors also welcome the opportunity to publish the results of systematic reviews if they are conducted with an approved partnership at an approved centre. An example of such a centre is the Oral Health Group of the Cochrane Collaboration at Manchester University. Prior publication by the approved centre does not preclude the publication of the work in a mainstream journal. There are rarely copyright problems, and dissemination of such results is the responsibility of journal editors.

Peer review

The most important task of an editor in controlling the quality of the journal is the selection of referees. Internationally accepted practices, such as adoption of consort [uniform] guidelines serve to ensure the quality of reviews. In order to ensure quality in manuscript reviews, editors agree to recommend referees (from their own lists) to each other in the event of a need.

Backlog

Journals ought to make their backlog information available. This can be achieved by printing the submission and acceptance dates with each article. The conference recognises the need for reports on certain topics to be published quickly. The backlog information will enable authors to weigh visibility against immediacy in their choice of a journal.

The Internet

Quality control on the Internet

The CD-ROM is now outdated. The Internet version of the printed page is the medium of the future. Publishing houses therefore are working very hard to offer Internet versions of their journals. The cost, however, is a problem for editors and authors alike. Editors project that the reader of the future is likely to demand an interactive site. Additionally, referees familiar with this new medium might be in short supply. In a field like Orthodontics, submitted manuscripts in the future are likely to include interactive animation movies, or other yet unimagined forms of communication tools. While the Internet versions of published articles could facilitate Meta analyses, editors advise the publishers to safeguard against problems such as alteration of content by "hackers." Overall, the Internet will increase the publication and subscription costs significantly.

The Impact Factor

The impact of orthodontic publications

Journals of highly specialised fields are disadvantaged in their Impact Factor scores. It is well known that certain universities demand publications in high-impact-factor journals from their faculty for merit raises or promotions. It might be necessary to develop an Orthodontics-specific impact factor. Many of the significant articles in a specialty such as Orthodontics are hard to duplicate because of the time span required for assessments of long-term outcomes. In turn, citations are necessarily limited. Any well-designed and conducted study will impact the field significantly, quite independent of its ISI rating. Nonetheless, the appropriate and accepted format for a clinical paper is the evidence-based design. Editors encourage the submission of evidence-based clinical papers. Also encouraged are papers reporting on failures. In fact, the results of studies conducted on failed cases are likely to contain significant information.

The scope of an orthodontic journal

The journals of a clinical specialty have an obligation to publish clinically useful papers. These papers can take one of several forms: either (i) a clinical trial or technique, or (ii) a biological response mechanism study conducted with the tools of basic science. Although the readership favours clinical papers that are immediately applicable,

the advancement of the field to a point where the biological systems are manipulated by the clinician cannot exclude basic science.

Envoi

Implicitly, journalism is a symbiotic relationship between the author and the editor. Both have taken on the responsibility to convey useful information to their colleagues. Journals simply dispense information for either the academician or the practitioner, or both. The common goal of all our journals is to advance the field of Orthodontics. In that sense, the journal editor serves not only as grammar "police", but also carries the responsibility to advance the field. In this digital age, the quality of the published material, whatever form the publication may take, will determine the longevity of the field. This meeting of the orthodontic editors was born out of the need to ensure the quality of research and clinical reports in Orthodontics. Commercial forces can be overwhelming. The editor, the publisher, and the orthodontic societies all have a responsibility to protect and to advance the field.

Reported by: Orhan C. Tuncay (Convenor), Rainer R. Miethke, Kenji Takada, Malcolm L. Jones, David L. Turpin, Francesca A. Miotti, Brian W. Lee, Young-Guk Park, Robert J. Isaacson, and Larry W. White.

Symposium participants:

Am J Orthod Dentofac Orthop: T. M. Graber and D. L. Turpin
 Angle Orthodontist: R. J. Isaacson
 J Clin Orthod: L. W. White
 Orthodontic Waves: K. Takada
 Kieferorthopädie: R. R. Miethke and P. G. Jost-Brinkmann
 Hellenic Orthod Review: E. Basdra and A. E. Athanasiou
 Journal of Orthodontics: M. L. Jones
 Fortschr Kieferorthop: P. Dietrich
 Australian Orthod J: B. W. Lee
 Korean J Orthod: T. W. Kim and Y. G. Park
 Revista Soc Argentina Ortod: J. Harfin
 Rev Latinoamer Ortodon: S. Roldán
 Revista Mex De Ortod: J. L. H. Cerda
 Ortod Wsdotczesna: A. Komorowska
 Prog Orthod: F. Miotti and O. C. Tuncay
 Turkish J Orthod: A. Enacar
 Czech Republic: V. Bednar
 Egyptian J Orthod: S. F. Abdoulazm
 Jordanian Dent J: H. Jarrah
 J Indian Orthod Soc: O. P. Kharbanda
 Rev d'Orthop DentoFac: C. Bolender and K. Siffany
 AJODO Ed Française: P. Mollard
 Clin Orthod Res: O. C. Tuncay