

# Editorial

## TRANSFERRING SCIENCE AND ANSWERING YOUR QUESTIONS



Dr. John P. O'Keefe

**I**t hardly seems possible to me that 5 years have already elapsed since I wrote my first editorial for *JCDA*. This anniversary gives me pause to look back at what has been accomplished so far, and articulate what I am working towards.

When I assumed the editorship, I consulted widely about how you perceived *JCDA*. During that exercise, I learned that we had quite a task to make it more appealing to readers. Two readership surveys in 2000 and 2002 provided us with measures of how we were progressing. We also gathered pertinent information from a survey conducted by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) in December 2001.

According to the most recent surveys, you believe that *JCDA* is a scientifically credible publication and perceive it to be a useful educational resource. However, your main criticism

is that it is not clinically oriented enough. Encouragingly, you indicate that *JCDA* is still improving.

Further cause for encouragement — the CIHR survey indicated that Canadian dentists believe research is an important guide to clinical decision-making. You see *JCDA* as a valid source of research information, although you are very clear about wanting us to find new ways to present clinical research findings. Your preferred formats for this type of information are Clinical Abstract-style summaries and clinical practice guidelines.

The part of the 2002 questionnaire relating to communications preferences yielded fascinating responses that will be most helpful to CDA in planning future communications strategies with its members and with other groups in organized dentistry. According to the survey, about 80% of Canadian dentists use the Internet, and many of them are using high-speed connections. Most of their Internet use is for non-professional purposes. Even though 30% of respondents now use the Internet regularly to search for dental information, they still have a clear preference for receiving paper-based communications from CDA — primarily in journal and newsletter formats.

Your preferences are very important to me as I plan the course ahead for providing clinical information in *JCDA*, its online version *eJCDA* and the members' side of the CDA Web site. What you seek in terms of scientific and clinical information is in keeping with a concept that is all the rage in research circles these days, namely "science transfer." This entails presenting scientific information in a manner that is easily understandable and directly applicable to clinicians.

Both the International Association for Dental Research and CIHR declared science transfer to be a major

priority. If clinicians don't adopt research findings, those research efforts will have been largely wasted. I believe that *JCDA* is positioned to become a top-class science transfer publication. This is an objective I am consistently working towards.

To bring this about, I have asked clinical faculty members and others to consider writing concise clinical review articles on topics pertinent to everyday dental practice. You will notice more of such review articles in future editions of *JCDA*. Of course, we continue to publish Clinical Abstracts to give you a flavour of clinical research recently published in other journals.

We have also introduced a new practical clinical section (Point of Care) that aims to provide concise answers to questions that Canadian dentists are asking — the types of questions that generalists call specialists about every day of the week, or the ones that you ask a speaker during the break at a continuing education course. I request that you please send me clinical questions for this section, so that it can thrive and expand.

With this edition, you will have seen 3 versions of the Point of Care section. Do you think it is a worthwhile addition to *JCDA*? Should we aim to expand it? Would there be value in having, on the CDA Web site, resources providing further information to that contained in the Point of Care and Clinical Abstracts sections (e.g. the full text of the abstracted articles or those referenced at the end of the Point of Care responses)? I need your guidance as we attempt to make *JCDA* an ever more useful resource for you.

*John O'Keefe*  
1-800-267-6354, ext. 2297  
[jokeefe@cda-adc.ca](mailto:jokeefe@cda-adc.ca)