

Making a difference

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My tenure as editor of *The Angle Orthodontist* comes to an end with publication of the next issue...the last you will receive this century. It seems like only yesterday that I received several cartons of manuscripts, a list of referees, and orders to publish a journal. I wanted to give the journal an updated look, so I met with a professor at the Medill School of Journalism in Chicago. I brought the ideas from that meeting home, where we used them to redesign *The Angle Orthodontist* from cover to cover. After our first year of publication, *The Angle Orthodontist* was recognized for its overall improvement in layout and design by winning the Golden Scroll Award, sponsored by the International College of Dentists.

The Foundation of the Edward H. Angle Society then saw fit to approve initiation of the E.H. Angle Research Prize to encourage members to publish papers of clinical significance. This year, the list of meaningful articles has grown to include Dr. Jim Boley's paper on facial change (Boley JC, Pontier JP, Smith S, Fulbright M. Facial changes in extraction and non-extraction patients. *Angle Orthod* 1998;68(6):539-546). These award-winning papers are by no means a full measure of the scientific findings we've reported over the years, but they are papers that have influenced the way I practice today. I suggest you reexamine the winners of this prize, listed on page 396.

To provide more space for the in-

flux of new manuscripts, the Board of Directors of the E.H. Angle Foundation decided to increase the number of issues per year from four to six. Later on, they allowed us to increase the number of pages per issue as well. These changes resulted in an 80% increase in the amount of space dedicated to the reporting of research findings.

With the end of my influence over *The Angle Orthodontist*, and with the passing of the millennium, it seems appropriate to look back at 10 years of published papers and ask a simple question, "Did they make any difference?" More to the point, "Are we better equipped now to care for the orthodontic needs of our patients than we were in the 70s and 80s?"

You will have to answer these questions for yourself, but a quick look at the data is surprising, even to me. During the past 10 years we published 432 original manuscripts as submitted by 1448 authors from around the world. Sixty case reports, 60 commentaries, and 12 special articles were included. Fifty-five editorials explored a wide range of topics, usually based on some of the research findings reported in each issue. Those readers in disagreement with the findings as disclosed in the journal were encouraged to write a letter to the editor, and many took advantage of this opportunity. (Turn to the Letters section, page 389, for an example.) As manuscripts were revised and edited, they were categorized by research topic, which

provided a specific direction to sections of the journal. Commentaries and editorials were used to emphasize the common threads of clinical care upon which these research procedures were based.

The majority of papers published fell into the categories of diagnosis and treatment planning, dental materials, and growth. Following these popular subjects came occlusion, archform and stability, imaging, genetics, and adverse sequelae.

The E.H. Angle Education and Research Foundation has taken action to ensure the publication of outstanding orthodontic research well into the next millennium with the appointment of Robert J. Isaacson as editor designate. He is currently professor and chair of the Department of Orthodontics, Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, Virginia. In describing his view of the changes you can expect in the future, Dr. Isaacson notes, "The Angle Orthodontist needs to develop electronic media distribution techniques allowing it to be the place where the latest information is available first." You will learn more about why we are fortunate to have Dr. Isaacson joining the journal in the next issue.

Now, as we prepare to step into the 21st century, take a few minutes to review the research that has been meaningful to you and how it improved the level of orthodontic care in your office. Setting aside the numbers, it's the quality of care your patients receive that really counts.

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