

A Précis of the Proceedings of the First International Orthodontic Editors' Symposium

28 April 2000

An historic meeting of the orthodontic journal editors was held in Chicago under the sponsorship of the World Federation of Orthodontists (WFO) in conjunction with the 100th AAO Annual Session, the 5th International Orthodontic Congress, and the 2nd meeting of the WFO (Table 1). The purpose of the symposium was to explore means of elevating the standards of orthodontic journalism. The editors discussed standardization of article preparation and submission practices and explored the present and future potential of Internet journalism. Additionally, ways to reconcile the attention paid to impact factors and the need to disseminate information was debated.

THE MANUSCRIPT

Manuscript submission. Submission of an article that was 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, with copyright problems perhaps heading the list. The conference recognized that some research would never be available to academics if 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 standardized format will include the title, all authors, and ideally, a structured abstract.

Manuscript preparation. Currently, manuscript preparation guidelines are unique to the journal. Standardization, therefore, might abolish innovation and individuality. There are areas, however, where standardization makes sense, particularly in the references section. A widely used set of standards can be found in the *American Medical Association Manual of Style: A Guide for Authors and Editors* (Iverson C, Flanagan A, Fontanarosa PB, et al. 9th ed. Williams & Wilkins; 1997).

The nature of manuscripts. The conference recognized that there is a worldwide problem in 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 in an approved center. An example of such a center is the Oral Health Group of the Cochrane Collaboration at Manchester University. Prior publication by the approved center 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 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 recognizes 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.

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 are therefore working very hard to offer Internet versions of their journals. The cost, however, is a problem for everyone, 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 such as orthodontics, submitted manuscripts in the future are likely to include interactive animation movies or other yet-unimagined forms of communication tools. Although 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.

TABLE 1. Symposium Participants

Journal	Participants
Am J Orthod Dentofacial Orthop	TM Graber, DL Turpin
Angle Orthod	RJ Isaacson
J Clin Orthod	LW White
Orthod Waves	K Takada
Kieferorthopädie	RR Miethke, PG Jost-Brinkmann
Hellenic Orthod Rev	Basdra, AE Athanasiou
Orthod	ML Jones
Fortschr Kieferorthop	P Dietrich
Aust Orthod J	BW Lee
Korean J Orthod	TW Kim, YG Park
Rev Soc Argentina Ortod	J Harfin
Rev Latinoamer Ortod	S Roldán
Revista Mex De Ortod	JLH Cerda
Ortod Wsdotczesna	A Komorowska
Prog Orthod	F Miotti, OC Tuncay
Turk J Orthod	A Enacar
Czech Republic	V Bednar
Egyptian J Orthod	SF Abdoulazm
Jordanian Dent J	H Jarrah
J Indian Orthod Soc	OP Kharbanda
Rev Orthop Dentofac	C Bolender, K Siffany
AJODO Ed Francaise	P Mollard
Clin Orthod Res	OC Tuncay

THE IMPACT OF ORTHODONTIC PUBLICATIONS

Journals of highly specialized 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 1 of 2 forms: a clinical trial or technique or a biological response mechanism study conducted with the tools of basic science. Although the readership favors the immediately applicable clinical papers, 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 the academician, the practitioner, or both. The common goal of all our journals is to advance the field of orthodontics. In that sense, the journal editor not only serves as the grammar police, but also carries the responsibility of advancing 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.

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