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## Looking Back on 2024

As the year draws to a close, it is a good opportunity to reflect on the process of growing the body of knowledge that supports the dental hygiene profession. It is especially appropriate given the many challenges we are facing in meeting the oral health care needs of the public that we serve and the ongoing threats of misinformation in contemporary society. As the peer-reviewed scientific publication of the American Dental Hygienists' Association (ADHA), the purpose of the *Journal of Dental Hygiene (JDH)* is to support scientific inquiry in all phases of research. Study findings that are based on scientific methods support our professional growth and development, leading to improved oral health and wellness in our patients as well as the public. Regardless of our professional role, establishing a scientific basis for our practices and actions enables an ongoing dialogue and reflection on the research that may ultimately impact overall health outcomes.

Looking back on the research published in 2024, we continued to examine the long-term impacts of a global pandemic on patient care practices, while also exploring topics ranging from the relationship of ultrasonic scaler use on clinician hearing loss to the role anxiety plays in patient care outcomes. The June issue focused on opportunities and challenges in increasing access to oral care through medical dental integration programs and the various roles dental hygienists can play in this process. We have

also continued to build a collection of resources on the various aspects of the research process in the "Short Reports", adding topics including systematic reviews of the literature, qualitative studies, survey research as well as the report on research reliability and validity featured this month. These short reports are also available as professional development courses on CE Scholar, part of the ADHA CE Smart platform.

Our guest editorials and commentaries focused on critical issues in dental hygiene with topics ranging from family oral health care and oral health literacy to the elimination of patient-based licensure examinations. We will continue to feature opportunities for dialogue on the multiple and often complex issues facing our profession in the coming year.

While there are many publications targeting dental hygienists, (I know my email box is full of daily newsletters and magazines!) the *JDH* is the only peer-reviewed, research publication in the United States exclusively for the dental hygiene profession. Promotion of the scientific basis for dental hygiene practice requires a foundation based on research and we are indebted to the ADHA Board of Directors for valuing the importance of scholarly work and continuing to support the need for a research publication. I would be remiss if I did not give a special acknowledgement to the ongoing support of the ADHA Director of Education, Research and Advocacy, Dr. JoAnn

Gurenlian and the ADHA Director of Marketing and Communications Bronwyn Barrera, for their work in elevating the visibility and impact of the *JDH* to a wide range of audiences on multiple platforms.

I would also like to recognize the members of the *JDH* Editorial Advisory Board. The advisory board brings a diverse range of perspectives on the issues facing the profession and provides invaluable assistance in my editorial duties for the *JDH*. The peer review process is critical to any scholarly publication, and we continue to grow our pool of research and content experts to provide constructive feedback to authors. I would like to acknowledge the many authors who submitted manuscripts to be considered for publication in the past year. Regardless of the publication outcome of your submission, your commitment to research and scholarly work is to be commended. I urge authors and potential authors to continue to seek out mentors to provide guidance and support in your work. Writing with the goal of sharing one's work in a journal can be a daunting task; collaboration with a mentor can help lead to successful publication.

Lastly, I would like to thank the ADHA for their continued support of me in my role as managing editor of the journal. It is fulfilling on both a professional and personal level to work with so many authors to bring their work to publication. I look forward to meeting the challenges of the coming year!

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