

Guest Editorial

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Editor, *Journal of Dental Hygiene*, 1991 to 1997



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The majority of my dental hygiene career was spent teaching baccalaureate and master's degree students at the University of Iowa. The faculty and graduate students conducted research and often published their work in the *Journal of Dental Hygiene*. Faculty assigned readings from the *Journal* and students understood that it was the place to find the most current and reliable scientific information on dental hygiene education and practice. My educational, teaching, and publication experiences motivated me to apply for the Editorial Director position of the *Journal* in 1991.

I consider the American Dental Hygienists' Association's commitment to publish a refereed journal containing original, scientific research very significant for the professionalization of dental hygiene. The opportunity for dental hygiene faculty, graduate students and practitioners to conduct research on dental hygiene theory, education and practice and to publish it in their professional journal advances our field and contributes to the credibility of its practitioners. This professional development of dental hygiene can be reviewed and documented over time by looking at the number and types of scholarly research articles published in the *Journal* by dental hygienists. Additionally, dental hygiene practitioners can keep up with the scientific and practice changes that guide and improve their provision of care by reading their professional journal.

During my tenure as editor between 1991 and 1997, editorials and research articles focused on accountability of the profession in establishing authority and control over its own services and actions. Emphasis also was placed on developing and applying our own code of ethics that established specific principles and standards of conduct and practice. These ethical principles as well as evidenced-based care led to best practices and improved standards of care.

In 1992, the purpose of the *Journal* was modified to include a clear statement that it was a refereed and scientific publication. In January of 1993, the *Journal* content was redirected to focus exclusively on new knowledge that contributed to the theory and practice of dental hygiene through original research, literature reviews, and theoretical articles. Research with clinical implications for dental hygiene practice in a variety of settings was stressed. Some of the dental hygiene practice issues of the time found in the research articles included: dental hygiene assessment and treatment planning, infection control procedures, occupational hazards, ergonomics, HIV/AIDS, pain control, pit

and fissure sealants, special population groups, and alternative practice settings. Educational and professional issues included: quality assurance, self-regulation, independent practice, career recruitment and retention, a national dental hygiene research agenda, a theoretical framework for dental hygiene, and electronic information services.

During this period changes were made in the look and format of the *Journal* to bring it more in line with other research journals. Titles of articles were listed on the cover, structured abstracts were added with keywords to assist in indexing, the research funding source was listed on the front page, and authors were encouraged to apply the results of their research to dental hygiene education, practice and research. Abstracts of original student research from dental hygiene programs were added. In addition, the *Journal* included periodic guest editorials and opinion papers from leading practitioners, educators and researchers. The title of Editorial Director for the *Journal* was changed to Editor to align with designations in most scientific journals. The *Journal* was included in the Index to Dental Literature, Medline and PubMed, and the Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health (CINAHL) was added in 1994.

Another important change in the *Journal* was a reduction in the number of issues published yearly. In 1991 through 1992, nine issues were published. Due to budgetary constraints and the costs of publishing three ADHA publications, the *Journal* was reduced to six issues per year in 1993.

For a period of time, the number of articles submitted to the *Journal* declined, especially those related to dental hygiene education and literature reviews. Dental hygiene baccalaureate and master's degree program closures and budgetary constraints leading to reductions in the number of full-time faculty contributed to the decline. During 1996 and 1997 submissions markedly increased.

My *Journal* connections as a consumer, member of the editorial review board, author and editor were extremely educational, stimulating and rewarding throughout my dental hygiene career. The quality of the content of the *Journal* during my tenure can be attributed to the scholarly research efforts of the authors, the outstanding expertise and dedication of the editorial review board and the commitment to excellence by the ADHA editorial staff. I consider it a privilege to have collaborated with all of these contributors.