

Guest Editorial

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Dental Hygiene's Unique Treasure

The American Dental Hygienists' Association (ADHA) supports the advancement of dental hygienists and the profession of dental hygiene through its numerous publications. The oldest of these is the *Journal of Dental Hygiene (JDH)*, the dental hygiene profession's unique peer-reviewed research journal. Although a variety of scholarly papers of interest to dental hygiene professionals are published in *JDH*, its primary purpose is to publish and disseminate reports of original research conducted by dental hygienists.

The manner in which the ADHA has effectively fulfilled its information dissemination responsibilities is well documented in historical dental hygiene documents and publications. These records reveal that from its very beginning ADHA leaders understood that dental hygienists needed a way to share practice related information, especially new information. In response to that perceived need, ADHA in its first year of operation began publishing its own journal for dental hygienists. Thus, the forerunner of the *JDH* was born. The practice of reading each issue of *JDH* began for me when as a first year dental hygiene student such readings were required. Those first reading requirements soon developed into a lifelong practice.

Dental hygienists throughout the world now recognize the important role *JDH* has played in the advancement of their profession, and in their individual professional development. The *JDH* as we know it today evolved from simply fulfilling an information sharing task into its current recognition as a respected research journal. Because ADHA now uses other publications and communication methods for information dissemination, *JDH* appropriately focuses on publishing original research and other scholarly reports of importance to dental hygienists. A host of individuals are involved in publishing *JDH* and we are in-

debted to each for their contribution to the publication process.

In my ten-year experience as *JDH* editor, I found the manuscript review process highly supportive of authors, especially those new to publishing. Members of the *JDH* Manuscript Review Board are busy experienced researchers and authors who each year assume volunteer appointments to participate in the manuscript review process. Each one is committed to maintaining the integrity of the review process and of the Journal. Even so, they graciously assume responsibility for mentoring dental hygienist authors who may need a little extra guidance or encouragement. With rare exception, authors interpret reviewer comments and questions as helpful to them in revising and perfecting their manuscript before its final acceptance. I even developed a more critical eye for research design, methods and materials as a result of the observations, questions, and suggestions of reviewers. In that regard, *JDH* had a profound effect on my personal professional experience.

Because of that experience, I more fully understand the foundational role of *JDH* in the development of the dental hygiene profession. Fortunately for all concerned, *JDH* continues to influence the education, practice and scholarly pursuits of dental hygienists throughout the world. Although other publishing options are now available to dental hygienists, *JDH* continues to be a most desirable choice for the publication of research reports of particular relevance to dental hygiene education and practice. I do not envision that changing in the future.

I treasure my memories of the time I spent as *JDH* editor. Moreover, I will forever be grateful for the opportunity extended to me to share in the evolution of this unique dental hygiene treasure.