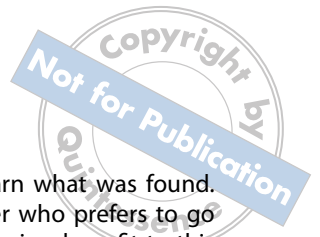


Value Added



Even scientific journal editors have to realize that we are providing a product to a consumer and that the consumer ultimately determines whether or not we are successful in our efforts. The consumer does this either by purchasing the product or by making the conscious decision to no longer do so. The product we offer is scientific literature. The consumer is every individual who reads the material presented in the journal. If the scientific content is interesting, thought provoking, practice changing, and/or intellectually stimulating, it is likely the reader will find the journal to be of value.

There are a number of ways to provide additional value in the product we offer. From an editorial standpoint, an effort is made to provide clear and concise articles that give the reader sufficient detail to understand what was done without being too verbose. This is a challenge because many authors believe all articles need to present a comprehensive review of the subject and tangential subjects being presented. Although it is tempting to begin a discussion of implant dentistry at the start of the discipline, we have to realize that doing so provides redundant information in every article. Instead, authors are asked to focus their introductions and discussions on the information that is germane to the topic at hand. Doing this allows the article to be shorter and clearer. This also offers the reader the opportunity to interpret the information provided in the article rather than having the author interpret material for the reader. The reader maintains autonomy in this regard. This is particularly important when an author is providing interpretation of introductory or discussion material, as that interpretation could be subjective in nature.

Additionally, the editorial policies can direct information to different sections within articles rather than leaving it to the discretion of the author as to where certain pieces of information should appear. This has become a challenge for the editorial staff. Authors are asked to pay careful attention to the guidelines for manuscript submission, which clearly indicate where material belongs and, perhaps more importantly, where it does not belong. Editors routinely ask authors to remove results from the "materials and methods" section of an article and place them into the "results" section where they truly belong. This appears to be an ongoing effort in the education of our authors. Likewise, authors are asked to provide specific aims for their research efforts, as this identifies to the reader what will take place in the article that follows. Ultimately these specific aims must be readdressed in the conclusion of the article, as the conclusion describes what the study determined relative to those initial aims.

Many of these ideas are structural in nature. Some may ask if the structure needs to be so regimented. The response is that regimentation allows readers to direct their efforts to the sections of the paper that interest them most. The logic is that a reader who is intrigued by the materials and methods can go to that section to understand how the study was designed, whereas a reader who is interested primarily in the outcome of the study

can go to the results section to learn what was found. There is no detriment for the reader who prefers to go from beginning to end; in fact, there is a benefit to this reader because information will not be repeated, thereby diminishing the reader's burden.

Lately JOMI's growing backlog of accepted articles has made it difficult to publish papers in a timely fashion. This journal is blessed with a large number of submissions, which allows the journal to be selective in the material it publishes. However, despite the increase in the number of pages published over the past several years, the number of articles in the publication queue needs to be addressed. Several ideas have been introduced for discussion between the editorial staff and the publisher. You will be seeing changes as some of these ideas are implemented.

Electronic-only publication of case and technical reports began last year. This year, articles related to biomechanics are beginning to appear online only. With the next issue of this journal, all biomechanics articles will appear online only. The abstracts and select images from biomechanics articles and all case and technical reports will be presented on a full page in the print issue, with a QR code that will link subscribers (those with smart phones and e-readers, that is) to the electronic version of the complete article. The reason for this is simple: there are limits on the number of pages that can be published on a bimonthly basis. Articles that present material on biomechanics or case and technical reports generally require more illustrations to clarify the material presented. By using electronic publication, the journal is less limited in the number of figures, tables, etc, that make these technically complex subjects more clear. By following this approach, these articles will gain earlier publication, and additional implant science and clinical application articles can be included in each issue of the print journal.

At some point in the future, you will see electronic presentation of all articles prior to print publication. This will get critical, time-dependent information into the hands of the readers sooner, while still providing the permanent record of the scientific information in the printed version of the journal. Obviously the electronic publication of articles ahead of print requires that articles be copyedited far sooner than would normally be the case. Doing this will likely demand an increased level of staffing and a more robust electronic site, as readers will go to that site for the early release of articles.

This is a glimpse of things to come. The structural policies have been ongoing for the last few years, but the transition to a much more rigid structure remains a work in progress. Ultimately all these initiatives are put forward in an effort to provide additional value to our readership. I hope you agree with these ideas and enjoy the changes.

Steven E. Eckert, DDS, MS
Editor-in-Chief