



AMERICAN ORTHOPTIC JOURNAL

OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF CERTIFIED ORTHOPTISTS

Volume 55, 2005

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OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF CERTIFIED ORTHOPTISTS

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Each issue of the *American Orthoptic Journal* will contain those papers presented at the joint symposium of the American Orthoptic Council and the American Association of Certified Orthoptists during the annual meeting of the American Academy of Ophthalmology. The Richard G. Scobee Memorial lecture and the John Pratt-Johnson Annual lecture will also be published. An abstract department will include selections from the current literature. The remainder of the Journal will consist of papers which are selected from those submitted for review. Original scientific work, brief case reports, descriptions of new instruments and procedures, and timely reviews of pertinent topics will be considered appropriate for the Journal, and will be judged on their merit. All essayists at the regional and national orthoptic meetings are urged to consider the *American Orthoptic Journal* for publication.

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Editorial

It is a privilege to contribute to the *American Orthoptic Journal*. As a member of the American Orthoptic Council for many years and now as new president, it is a special honor. Pediatric ophthalmology, orthoptics, and the Journal have been intertwined for me my entire career. One of the great things about our work is the amazing range of responsibilities. We not only provide patient care but we are politicians, administrators, fund-raisers, philanthropists, researchers, writers, educators, and more. Each of these requires different skill sets and each offers unique challenges.

Previous editorials have been a collection of insight and charm, frequently cataloguing both accomplishments and challenges, often recurring ones. These confirmed a basic tenet of organizations as well as individuals. We always have challenges and sometimes even crises with which we must deal. These may be new and unexpected or perennial and frustrating, a minor nuisance or seemingly earth shattering.

Most of us are very familiar with the current issues in our profession: the undersupply of orthoptists, the simultaneous tasks of supporting training programs while insisting on educational excellence, professional ethics, practice building, standards and patterns, billing issues, continuing education, orthoptist vs. optometrist in the office, retinoscopy skills. The list goes on.

We can never maintain the status quo (and probably should never want to). Therefore, the importance of each challenge we face is less important than how we face it. It is our approach, the process of addressing the challenge—our philosophy, if you will—that is crucial.

In meeting challenges and in fulfilling our job titles we can easily slip into arrogance, self-interest, and egocentrism. But the beauty of the marriage between ophthalmology and orthoptics is how functional the relationship is. I have always observed us to be a model of cooperation. The analogy of the binocular system is too tempting to pass up: we perceive the world independently and simultaneously, but our unique fusion adds a depth to our professional lives that I believe is unparalleled. We truly are a team yoked together in which the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. Hering would be proud.

How is this possible when dysfunctional attitudes so often creep into other organizations? To continue the analogy, why aren't we amblyopic or strabismic? I believe it is because we place such a great emphasis on the mission of the organization rather than the organization itself. We place the time-honored medical triumvirate of clinical care, education, and research above all else. And we ask one overarching question: how is the patient or student best served?

An editorial is by nature an opinion. And mine is this. We will grow and prosper, we will surmount our challenges and crises if we keep our mission paramount. Clinical care (service), education, research. It's what ophthalmology, orthoptics, this journal, and the AOC are all about.

James D. Reynolds, M.D.
President
AOC

Editorial

Time. It is an elusive quality. There never seems to be enough. We are all so busy with the various aspects of our lives that we never seem to catch up. We are always behind. It seems to be worse than ever these days. However, history tells us that this problem with time is not new. Old adages like “burning the candle at both ends” let us know that we have never had enough time.

As throughout history, we are besieged by new gadgets, all meant to save time. Remember the washing machine and the dishwasher? We (or they) used to do that stuff by hand. But, I have not gotten the hang of the new electronic stuff yet. I know their intention, but these new gadgets do not seem to save me time. First, I have to learn how to use them. This can be a quite lengthy process. The phrase “even a child can do it” makes me cringe. Because, yes, although I have problems, my students and even my child seem to grasp the concepts right away. Then I have to actually maintain their use, which for PDAs, cell phones, and laptops means inputting data, remembering to recharge, maintaining data, remembering to recharge. Well, you get the picture. It is all so much for me. Paper and pencil weren’t so bad, were they? Ah, but I digress.

Let’s get back to time, or the lack thereof. One of the casualties of the time crunch has been volunteerism. Because we are all so busy with the rest of our lives, it is harder to volunteer our time to things that we believe in. We would, but we just don’t have the time. Luckily, for the AACO, many orthoptists volunteer their time and their talents to the organization. For this, I am truly thankful, because without our volunteers, we could not function. However, as I am sure we could all agree, we could always use more help. The more people get involved, the more truly great things we could accomplish. There is an old adage that I hear from my mother all of the time. If you want something done, ask a busy person. We are all busy. We could all fit one more thing in, right?

Pamela J. Kutschke, C.O.
President
AACO

Editorial

Every year the contents of the journal seem to indicate the direction that orthoptics is taking. This year is certainly no exception! Without a doubt, one would have to say that the “theme” of this year’s volume is neuro-ophthalmology. The combined symposium held at the AAO annual meeting was entirely devoted to that subject, thanks to the direction of Dr. Michael Siatkowski and Ms. Pam Kutschke, the co-chairs. I feel that this is a sign of the increasing interest of neuro-ophthalmologists to work with orthoptists, finding them to be invaluable in their daily practices. Something we pediatric ophthalmologists/strabismologists learned long ago! Several other papers are also either concerned with neuro-ophthalmology subjects, or are written either by neuro-ophthalmologists or by orthoptists that work in that field.

Subjects that are well known to all of us, including amblyopia, high AC/A esotropia, and vision screening are also in this issue, indicating the continued interest in common topics that are being looked at in new ways. The past few years have brought us a number of papers produced by the PEDIG that have changed our thoughts about amblyopia, its treatment and outcomes, and have brought us into the realm of “experience-based medicine.” While I do not like the implication that previous treatment was not based on scientific studies, it is interesting to see that there may be “many roads to good vision” (paraphrasing Dr. Burt Kushner in the recent publication of his *Binocular Vision and Strabismus Quarterly Case Reports*). It remains to be seen how many of the new methods of treatment—e.g., atropine only on weekends—outlast our tried and true methods of patching. I am hopeful that a combination of all of these methods will prevail as we learn more about them and about our patient’s willingness to comply.

Welcome to our new Editorial Board members, Drs. James Reynolds and Michael Siatkowski and orthoptists Pamela Kutschke and Gill Roper-Hall. They will bring some new perspectives to the board. We look forward to working with them.

2005 marks the 100th anniversary of the publication by Alexander Duane of his description of what we now know as Duane syndrome. Gill Roper-Hall is continuing last year’s Historical Vignette with one concerning this interesting man.

Our first year on Ingenta[®], appears to be successful. While it is not clear how many subscribers are using this means to acquire the journal, I would encourage all of you to look at the website and at some of the journal articles (www.wisc.edu/wisconsinpress/journals). You will find that you have access to many of the articles in the references with only the need to click on the name of the reference to bring it up on your screen! Truly a wonderful new way to read journals!

Thomas D. France, M.D.
Editor