

## Editorial

### Past, Present and Future

WITH the completion of Volume 10 of this *Journal*, there comes a time for retrospection and prospectation. As the founder and as editor of *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* during its first decade, I thought it might be worth recording some purely personal observations on the clinical nutrition scene.

#### PAST

This *Journal* was founded because it was sincerely believed that nutrition science was well advanced in experimental (i.e., animal) areas but far behind in clinical application. We also believed, and do now, that we are in the midst of an extremely fruitful period of research and development in the nutritional sciences. Indeed, the middle of the twentieth century may well be the golden period of this biologic discipline.

It was also our hope that a periodical— independent, free from commercial pressures and dedicated to the highest standards—would offer a unique service to the medical and allied professions by cutting across traditional lines of specialization. Thus, in our first editorial we said:

“The ramifications of nutrition are universal. Think of the obstetrician—he is concerned with the nutrition of the fetus through the mother, the anemias of pregnancy, the management of toxemias; the pediatrician—his greatest role is that of defender of good nutrition and hence of the normal

growth and development of the child; the internist—he is preoccupied with nutrition as an essential in the management of the diabetic, hypertensive, cirrhotic, anemic, nephritic, the obese and the lean, the pellagrin, *ad infinitum*; the surgeon—he pioneered in recognizing the essentiality of fluid balance and nitrogen replacement; yes, and the geriatrician—for he holds out to the elderly the hope of happier years through sane eating. Why, all physicians are involved with nutrition, for it is not the disease that is important, but the person who has the disease—and each person is the product of his nutrition.”<sup>1</sup>

In addition, we believed that not only should *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* be a medium of communication between scientists, but that it should also raise the status of clinical nutrition as a subject worthy of greater attention in medical schools, hospitals and, most important, clinical practice.

These objectives remain. A start has been made, but the goal is yet to be reached.

In the early life of the *Journal* we were particularly fortunate to come under the wing of the Yorke Medical Group (during the publication of Volume 2). Since that time there have been only the best of publisher-editor relationships. Later, Yorke was purchased by the Reuben H. Donnelley Corporation. Through their operating vice president, Edward A. O'Rorke, there has continued to be complete rapport and understanding, and the encouragement and sympathetic cooperation of



our publisher, Mr. Pliny A. Porter, has been of inestimable assistance to us.

(It is of passing interest to review Volume 1. Among the observations reported therein are the significant findings of pyridoxine deficiency in infants<sup>2</sup> and the effect of vegetable fats on serum cholesterol and phospholipids,<sup>3</sup> to select but two which opened up new research areas and which are still being actively pursued.)

#### PRESENT

The increasing tempo of clinical research was reflected in the increasing numbers of good papers submitted to the *Journal*. This led to the decision to change the *Journal* from a bimonthly to a monthly beginning with Volume 10. We hope to reduce the unavoidable delay in publishing worthwhile papers—a situation faced by most, if not all, of the leading periodicals.

The heightened increase of interest in nutrition as applied to human disease led us to some early discussions with Dr. Robert S. Goodhart, Dr. Richard Vilter and others, which resulted in the establishment of the American Society for Clinical Nutrition.<sup>4</sup> We founded the Society essentially with the same objectives as the *Journal*, and therefore it was logical for *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* to become the official journal of the Society. Vilter has described the origins and affiliations of this new clinical group.<sup>4</sup>

I have been most fortunate to have had the cooperation of many of our leading clinical investigators who served as members of the Editorial Board. Of the present Board, five, Drs. Goldsmith, György, Kark, Shuman and Wintrobe, were members of the original group. I particularly wish to thank Drs. Dock, Jeghers, MacBryde, Wohl and Youmans who were with us in the uncertain days of the first volumes. A large and loyal group of abstracters and manuscript referees were of inestimable help to us. Much of the difficult task of editing, proofreading and manuscript preparation was in the capable hands of our managing editors. Mrs. Helena B. Mannion has served faithfully and expertly in the demanding position previously held by two pro-

ficient associates, Miss Carol-Joyce Howell and Mrs. Charlotte Pascal.

#### THE FUTURE

As I see the present situation, the *Journal*, now a monthly receiving an ample supply of good papers from all over the world, is in a good state of health. The new Society will undoubtedly grow in number, significance and influence. The childhood and adolescent stage has been successfully weathered and a stable maturity seems assured.

This would seem a good time to step down and place the editorial burdens in other hands. I am pleased to report that Dr. Willard A. Krehl, now of Iowa, has consented to be the Chief Editor beginning with Volume 11. I am sure that he, with the traditional cooperation of the Editorial Board and the Publisher, will continue on the path already demarcated.

Some problems still remain. It is necessary in our present state of affairs to depend a great deal on our advertisers. I hope our readers will do everything they can to signify to advertisers their interest in the *Journal* and to encourage greater utilization of its pages to carry the manufacturers' messages. Furthermore, circulation remains the life blood of any periodical. We look forward to continued growth in this dimension.

Among the problems we faced in the first decade, and which remain, are: Should the *Journal* publish more experimental (nonclinical) papers? Should the abstract section be increased, altered or eliminated? Should there be more articles on diet therapy? Indeed, what are the confines of nutrition? Where does it end and metabolism, endocrinology and biochemistry begin? In short, how can the *Journal* better serve the needs of its readers? I hope the future editors will receive suggestions and advice as I have had. Truly the future of *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* is in the hands of its loyal subscribers.

Finally, I must add that the past ten years have been a particularly gratifying decade for me. I have enjoyed the companionship of leading scientists and the invigorating challenge of being at the forefront of medical



advances. To those who follow I can vouch for a successful past, a healthy present and a most encouraging future.

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## REFERENCES

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