
Publisher's Note

The Journal of Record

When we began publication in 1974 our most vocal imperative was to create “. . . a forum to stimulate the development of a firm literature base for all aspects of Family Practice.”¹ As we approach our seventh year of publication and enter the decade of the eighties, we can proudly point to the accomplishment of that goal. Our achievement is perhaps best summarized by the following paragraph from a recent editorial in the *Journal of the Royal College of General Practitioners*:

The Journal of Family Practice is the first attempt on the North American continent to publish a journal of record about the discipline of family practice. It was started in 1974 and is now well established as the leading monthly journal of general practice on that continent. Here at last are original articles written by family physicians about the discipline of family practice. Here in detail is evidence about the nature of the work done, facts about problems met, and evidence of the outcomes achieved. Here, in short, is a journal dedicated to improving the quality of family practice.²

The same editorial describes the function of a journal of record thusly “. . . to report the advances in the discipline, and this can be done only by practitioners of that discipline setting down on paper for discussion and criticism by their peers their ideas and results.”

Statistics from the National Library of Medicine document dramatically the contribution of *The Journal of Family Practice* to the literature of the discipline. From the establishment of a family practice category in the universal reference *Index Medicus* in 1978, the most frequently cited journal through August 1979 was *The Journal of Family Practice*, with 164 citations. By contrast, during the same period *The Journal of the American Medical Association* had 14 citations, *The New England Journal of Medicine* 5, and *American Family Physician* 1.

Each of these other publications has its own important editorial imperative and understandably each can devote only limited space to publication of original family practice literature, hence the *raison d'être* of *The Journal of Family Practice*.

We are most gratified to have the successful attainment of our primary editorial objective recognized by other esteemed publications and agencies. Of course we are not content to relax with laurels for attainments to date, and we work diligently not only to build monthly upon the base we have established, but also constantly to improve the quality of our literature. However, much of the determination of quality in our articles is through selection and suggestion; beyond that we have little control. Happily, you, our readers—family and general practitioners—are developing marvelous habits of carefully observing your own practices and recording the events that occur there. Ever more frequently you describe in writing to us something new or special to be shared with your colleagues for your mutual advancement. You, then, are the source not only of the base of literature in family practice but the assurance of its growth and quality as well.

Under the press of daily practice, even leading a full and rewarding family life may sometimes seem to require an additional valiant effort. In this climate, not only writing but reading itself must be subject to stern priorities. So, when faced with the inevitable monthly onslaught of informative journals and the need to keep up with advances in your own specialty, we hope you turn first to the journal of record in your field, *The Journal of Family Practice*.

After reading each issue, be sure to file it in sequence in your library. Then, with the aid of our regularly published subject/author indices, you will have immediate access to a veritable encyclopedia of family practice literature through the seventies and onward.

David W. Stires
President and Publisher

References

1. Geyman JP: Expanded literature base as a critical need in family practice. *J Fam Pract* 1(1):4, 1974
2. Journal of Family Practice, editorial. *J R Coll Gen Pract* 29:259, 1979