

## ***Foreword***

A scientific journal has to fulfil a number of roles. Its first role is to inform its readers of new knowledge by disseminating the results of research. However, it has many other roles, including presenting case studies, discussing new techniques, and stimulating debate. If the journal is to be internationally recognised, the quality of the research it publishes has to meet international standards. Unfortunately, the quality of research reported in many papers submitted to many journals does not meet the required standards and the papers concerned are rejected. This causes disappointment to the authors concerned and, sometimes, frustration and anger.

Because the annual publication of research in international peer-reviewed journals, ideally with an impact factor, is now a requirement for promotion in most universities, there is pressure for academics to publish. If the leaders of Faculties require their staff to publish, it is important that they know what the required standards are and insist on high standards of research and well-written papers that meet international standards. In my opinion, the rejection of a paper on the grounds of poor quality research is a reflection not only on the author or authors but also on their Faculty and, more importantly, on the head of the Faculty, who should ensure that all papers reach the required standard before they are submitted to a journal. Frequently, the problem with poor papers lies in the design of the research that is reported. Basic requirements include writing a comprehensive protocol before commencing the research and closely monitoring progress while the research is taking place. As far as the resulting paper or papers are concerned, it is essential that authors follow the instructions (guidelines) for authors for the journal or journals they are submitting to.

Over the last two years, over 50% of papers submitted to this journal have not met these basic

requirements and have been rejected. The two main problems have been very poor research design and disregard of the instructions (guidelines) for authors. At a recent workshop for Deans and Heads of Research on the topic of improving the quality of research in Faculties of Dental Medicine, the editor of a peer-reviewed dental journal with an impact factor reported that only one in five of the papers submitted to his journal is accepted and a common reason for the rejection of the others is not that of poor research design but that their authors do not follow the instructions (guidelines) for authors. A report of this workshop appears in this edition. The workshop was the fourth in an annual series organised by the European Association of Dental Public Health (EADPH) and sponsored by GABA International. Next year's workshop will be on reviewing and will include how to review abstracts submitted to scientific conferences and meetings, papers submitted to journals, and grant applications when acting as a referee for national and international organisations. Details will appear on the EADPH website during the first half of 2012.

With the end of the year approaching, it is a time to look back at achievements and failures and to reflect on why these outcomes occurred. It is also a time to plan for the future. However, most importantly, it is a time to celebrate Christmas and the New Year with family and friends. I wish all readers a very happy Christmas and a healthy, happy, and prosperous New Year and to those who submit papers to this journal, I request that you always follow the instructions (guidelines) for authors to the letter and before submitting a paper refer to the check-lists that reviewers will use when they assess the paper.

Prof. Dr. Kenneth A. Eaton  
Editor-in-Chief