

EDITORIAL

Scholarly Communication and the Future of a Canadian Nursing Institution

I am very honoured to begin my term as *CJNR*'s Editor-in-Chief. In a sense I have grown up with the Journal, professionally speaking, from my days as a doctoral student at McGill University, when I assisted the Managing Editor in the *CJNR* office, through my postgraduate years when I wrote peer reviews, joined the editorial board, and eventually took up duties as Associate Editor while posted at other universities, and, finally, now that I have returned to McGill as a professor, in the position of Editor-in-Chief.

It is at once tremendously exciting and quite natural for me to take the reins from my mentor and friend, Dr. Laurie Gottlieb. After more than two decades as Editor-in-Chief, Dr. Gottlieb leaves *CJNR* on a solid footing. Under her guidance the Journal has developed into a leading outlet for Canadian scholarship in nursing and related health sciences, with a distinct international accent — a meeting place for early-, mid-, and late-career scholars to present work that might not easily fit elsewhere. It is our good fortune that Laurie will remain associated with *CJNR* as Editor Emeritus and that we will be able to draw on her expertise. Laurie deserves enormous credit for producing a journal whose upward shift in quality has mirrored the growth of academic nursing in Canada. Her decision many years ago to invite Canadian experts in sub-fields of nursing research to guest edit clusters of articles in their specialties was an astute one. She established and developed exceptional editorial processes with the collaboration and assistance of dedicated Associate Editors, Guest Editors, and Journal staff.

More than two decades ago, when I embarked on my career in nursing, reading articles and photocopying them was a demanding and sometimes tedious pursuit, requiring one to be present in the library during its regular hours. Carrying out a literature search meant consulting reference tomes or (for a brief period) early electronic versions of CINAHL and Index Medicus available on multiple CD-ROMs. Submitting articles for publication and then waiting for and responding to peer review and editorial decisions was a long and often expensive process before the days of e-mail, complicated by the vagaries of the

postal service. Waiting — to publish articles and to locate and read relevant articles — was the watchword. Now, in the Internet age, we spend less time waiting, as authors and as readers, but the number of journals has exploded, as has the number of nurses and other scholars eager to publish their work. The superficial mechanics of journal publishing and scholarship consumption have been streamlined, and it is easy to forget that journals are *primarily* a means for scholarly communication and that their role in building academic CVs or generating revenues to cover publication costs is secondary.

What has always amazed me about scholarly writing is the time invested by well-informed, hardworking people in drafting text to be read by unseen colleagues, as well as the amount of toil and quantity of resources expended in bringing their ideas to light. During my socialization as a researcher and then peer reviewer, editorial assistant, and, ultimately, editorial board member, I learned a great deal about the economics of journal publishing. From the perspective of the authors, of course, many career paths involve rewards for contributing to the scientific literature, while from the perspective of the journals there is always a need for a commodity that end-users are willing to pay for. However, the literature is first and foremost a means for reader and writer to communicate with each other. The quest for scholarly exchange is the beacon guiding high-quality, meaningful scholarship, whether this is analyzed at the level of the individual article, the scholar, or the journal.

I heartily agree with Laurie's analysis, in her last editorial, of all the challenges laid out in nursing, health care, and scholarly publishing. At *CJNR* we have been successful and relevant, but we cannot stop there. We must reinvent ourselves for our two core clienteles: readers and contributors. And we are comfortable being different from other journals in our content and in our organizational structure as we move forward.

Our vision for the future of the Journal is for *CJNR* to remain a key venue for the Canadian nursing research and scholarly community to disseminate its findings. We hope to make the international flavour stronger, however. We will always remain committed to publishing peer-reviewed, data-based articles in the solid methodological traditions in nursing and the health sciences. However, we are becoming increasingly cognizant of the fact that there are other forms of rigorous scholarship, equally worthy of publication, that do not necessarily fall into the conventional Introduction-Methods-Results-Discussion format of data-based quantitative articles. We know that there are ever-growing numbers of individuals at various levels in the profession carrying out and evaluating evidence-informed practice innovations; these authors deserve a venue to share their experiences, and, clearly, such experiences have a readership. Today's readers target specific articles and tend to make quick trips to

journal Web sites to pick them up — much as one might pick up MP3 files of songs from albums. They will not regularly visit sites or make serendipitous discoveries about other content that could be of interest to them unless we make it worth their while by offering appealing features. This is a time of profound change in health-care systems, research funding, and higher education in Canada and internationally. Useful, reliable information about trends affecting the careers of nurses involved in research, practice development, and education in the profession is not easy to come by, yet it is needed now more than ever before. Responding to the various needs and addressing all of the challenges will be part of our agenda in the coming years at *CJNR*.

I am most grateful that two dedicated Guest Editors were on board for this, my first issue as Editor-in-Chief. Drs. Elizabeth Borycki and Noreen Cavan Frisch of the University of Victoria have put together a wonderful issue on Nursing Informatics. Later this year you see will issues packed with interesting contributions on a variety of topics. When we shift to a Web presence exclusively in 2014, you will notice new features. Very soon you will be reading about our new editorial board structure and our new board, and as the year progresses you can expect to see a variety of calls for submissions in traditional as well as new scholarly formats.

To all those who have been involved in the Journal's successes since its founding 44 years ago, I offer a heartfelt thank you. The nursing community in Canada and internationally can count on us to continue providing a venue for the communication of important and innovative ideas. I look forward to working with all of you in growing *CJNR*'s role as a scholarly meeting place for our multifaceted and rapidly evolving profession.

Sean P. Clarke
Editor-in-Chief