



EDITORIAL

PUBLICATION AS A CATALYST FOR PROFESSIONAL DIALOGUE

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I love it when the moderator opens the microphone up to the audience after a lecture or oral abstract presentation at a scientific conference. Someone may ask a question or make a comment that challenges the methods or conclusions of work. They may ask for deeper explanations. Why was a particular statistical tool used? How were cases excluded? Was a different interpretation of the results considered? This sort of scholarly discussion is very healthy. It helps to advance the science and increases our understanding. I wish there was more of it.

Peer-reviewed journals provide another opportunity for scholarly exchange. They have correspondence sections where a letter to the editor can provide the start of interactions similar to those at scientific conferences. Unfortunately, few take advantage of this opportunity. Again, I wish that there was more of it. The publication of a scholarly paper should trigger well-mannered, well-reasoned conversations that probe into the paper's topic, premises, hypotheses, methods, analyses, results, discussion, conclusions, implications, and applications.

Now there are other places where these types of discussions are often taking place. Rather than in the letters to the editor sections, many professionals read and comment on research papers and other scholarly works on social media channels. It's great that these discussions are taking place, but it could be even better if the journal that published the article facilitated inclusion of the authors and invited all of the journal's readers to participate.

In an effort to foster these types of conversations about content published in the *International Journal of Paramedicine (IJOP)*, we will be taking a different approach to the traditional journal correspondence section. *IJOP* will be launching the Dialogue section with our next issue. It will still publish traditional letters to the editor but will also re-publish posts about *IJOP* content curated from select social media channels.

We plan to initiate these discussions with each new *IJOP* article announcement. We will be making those announcements on the National EMS Management Association's (NEMSMA) LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter accounts along with new social media channels being created specifically for *IJOP* on YouTube and elsewhere. We will also be starting a new e-mail discussion group for *IJOP*, separate from the popular NEMSMA discussion group. Featured papers from *IJOP* will each have their own thread on the new listserv.

These publication announcements and other types of content posts will get the conversations started. Authors will be invited to directly respond to the comments, questions, and discussions that follow. Readers will be encouraged to participate.

To help establish and maintain a professional and constructive decorum in these conversations, the message traffic will be moderated. That will allow *IJOP*'s social media editors to screen posts before becoming publicly visible. Everyone participating in these discussions will be asked to include their names and location or professional affiliation. Posts without identification or having an unconstructive or otherwise unprofessional tone will be sent back to the submitter for revision. We want authors and members of the professional community to feel safe to participate, comment, and ask questions without fear of unbecoming exchanges.

We anticipate that some experimentation and adjustment of these policies and procedures will be needed as we move forward, but we hope that the benefits will strongly outweigh the hassles and risks. We want innovation in the design of scholarly journals. We want to reach and engage more of our colleagues in scholarly discourse regarding the art and science of paramedicine. We hope that the Dialogue section and its approach will help accomplish that.

Watch for announcements about the Dialogue section as *IJOP*'s social media activities begin to ramp up. In the meantime, please use e-mail to submit comments or questions to be considered for publication in the Dialogue section. For now, send them to mic.gunderson@internationaljournalofparamedicine.com. I'm looking forward to your comments and questions to advance our science, understanding, and application.