



Onwards and Upwards

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This issue of your favorite journal marks a special moment—the seamless transition at *JACC: Cardiovascular Imaging* (or *iJACC*, as we fondly call it), as it gets ready for the next innings. *iJACC* has been quite successful, measured whichever way, over the last 10 years under Dr. Narula's tenure. He developed a perspicacious vision for the journal and harnessed an outstanding team of editorial colleagues to help implement it. There is much to celebrate and, more importantly, I inherit much to build upon. What will the journal look like going forward? While the masthead will have a different cast of characters, you will recognize a lot of continuity, for, in my mind transition is not meant to be an explosive change, but a thoughtful and deeply considered evolution based on ideas and principles that were simmering over the past decade. I was fortunate to be a part of the leadership at *iJACC* that worked hard to set up an attractive platform for investigators to showcase their best research and an exquisite educational resource for our readership (1-3). That platform and resource should not and will not change under my watch. The journal will continue to set very high and exacting standards for acceptance. Choice of papers will generally remain somewhat similar, but with a proclivity towards those that might change patient care strategies or influence outcomes. There will, of course, be the continued introduction of other exciting new features in a rolling manner over time and some cutting-edge interactive opportunities will align us more closely with the readership. However, the basic fabric you have come to expect of *iJACC* will remain

the same and perhaps waft over even more prominently in the ensuing years.

LOOKING BACK

In addition to a bit of happy nostalgia, looking back also allows for critical introspection. So what were the most important lessons from the last 10 years at *iJACC*? For one, there is never a dull moment, and each week brings out some unexpected success as well as challenges; a potpourri of praise and brickbats, complements for fairness in reviewing, an occasional censure from authors that we did not understand how valuable their paper was, and all of this sometimes sprinkled with a dash of real or alleged research improprieties, plagiarism, and anguish on who was the first to publish a presumed (or perceived) novel concept. Second, while all of us feel, albeit somewhat undeservingly, that we are experts at sniffing out the best papers, it is humbling to realize how difficult it is to accurately judge the real value in a paper; it becomes even more tricky when more and more high quality papers increasingly compete each year for the limited space in the journal. Acceptance rates for original papers remained under 8% throughout and I am sure we misjudged and passed on some really good papers. Going forward, we will continue to maintain a high bar for publication as behooves a quality journal, but we have planned a number of initiatives that will increase our capacity for publishing more papers each year, and, hopefully, make the acceptance rates somewhat more palatable. Third, it is vitally important to look at papers from the author's point of view too. Authors are currently disadvantaged by an inordinately long peer review process even at the highest quality journals and *iJACC* too is occasionally

guilty of such a lag. This is often compounded by an even longer delay before authors can see their work in print—I remain intensely bothered by this laborious journey for papers and we are looking at multiple novel ways to speed up the process—you will certainly see faster decisions from us and more tailored suggestions to improve your paper, should it need to go elsewhere. We are working hard to get accepted papers in print as soon as possible, but I clearly realize we have some ways to go. One common method to speed this up is to put up the last raw version of the accepted paper as online before print (OBP). While numerous journals use this format, we have internally decided to adhere to a more stringent quality control and wait till we have a camera-ready, fully proofed PDF version for OBP. This, admittedly, results in a slight delay in the OBP process, but has the immense advantage of necessitating no major corrigenda or errata once we release the manuscripts—what you see is what you get in print. We have some new initiatives in place and are working diligently with the publisher to squeeze our timelines aggressively. We hope the authors will cooperate with us and turn around their proofs as soon as possible.

How and where can we improve in the peer-review process? We have an ambitious plan to deliver the first decision well under 3 weeks after submission. We are in debt to our outstanding reviewers who work tirelessly for the cause of science with few tangible rewards. A number of new initiatives are in place to increase our reviewer pool, including a mechanism to bring in early-stage investigators—a roster of carefully selected emerging editorial consultants have been added to the masthead. Previous analysis of unaccepted papers (4) showed us our editorial board strike rate—a sensitivity of 80% for predicting papers likely to be highly valued by the field and specificity of 91% in identifying science not likely to generate high impact. We are working to fine tune this further in our editorial board meetings.

Fourth, quality is surprisingly difficult to define (5)—we have to be careful not to get fixated on the “metric of the day” but should define quality in a more broad and holistic manner. How have other investigators acknowledged and used what was published in *iJACC*? The journal does well on traditional metrics—it has an H-Index of 84, which happens to be the highest among all imaging journals and way ahead of the next best journal. Nearly 60 original research papers were so impactful that they generated 100 citations or more, 200 original research papers were cited at least 50 times, and *iJACC* has been referenced in over 35,000 citations; which is all

the more impressive when we consider that guidelines, which bring in significant citations, are a minuscule part of what we publish.

It also does well in terms of important nontraditional metrics like reader interest, page views, and applicability to patient care. While I realize that journals today are still unfortunately judged by the much derided impact factor, I remain convinced that it will be a very sad day if all that good journals did, was to focus on this fallible metric. My team and I will subscribe to a simple recipe: publish high quality, clinically relevant papers and let the chips fall where they may; we will aim for the broadest impact—be it in terms of patient care, readership education, practice improvement, advocating for crucial imaging related issues, or investigator interest. We plan to remain a modality-agnostic journal and strive to showcase the best in science, irrespective of which discipline it represents. *iJACC* does reasonably well with multiple modalities—among the papers with 100 or more citations, each of the modalities was represented rather well, varying from 15% to 27% of the whole pie. We will continue to keep this balanced perspective.

LOOKING FORWARD

This month, exactly 10 years ago, *iJACC* promised you that it would offer the best platform for the best of imaging sciences in a visually delightful package (1). The first decade of *iJACC* had a distinct goal—building the best forum from scratch. The next decade will be dedicated to harnessing our strengths, while taking our journal onwards and upwards! However, its *raison d'être*—to deliver the best science to the reader and bring a quick smile when someone eyes the journal—will remain essentially the same. The incoming editorial board is fully committed to this task. The journal now brings on 2 executive editors and 5 new associate editors to supplement the nonpareil editorial guild you already know so well. A whole new panel of distinguished guest editors will handle papers that pose potential conflicts of interest. The senior advisory panel has stalwarts of cardiology and imaging to guide us and make sure we do not stray from our main goal of imaging for outcomes rather than imaging for images, as we move from strength to strength. We will continue to recognize and honor our top reviewers with positions on the revamped roster of editorial consultants. Please stay tuned to these pages for previews of exciting developments as we roll them out over the ensuing months.

This issue was curated and compiled just like the 108 others produced in the first decade of the journal,

a lively documentation of the trot and canter of imaging science, punctuated by impressive leaps and sprints. Thomas Mann is said to have exclaimed, "Time has no divisions to mark its passage...it is only we mortals who ring bells and fire off pistols" (6). Nevertheless, we allowed ourselves to be a bit more sentimental about this issue than for the passage of others before, for this issue marks a major milestone. Let the bells ring and the pistols fire off for our

continued journey in making *ijacc* what it has always stood for: the best platform there is for the best of imaging.

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