

# From Strength to Strength: A New Era for *JCAG*

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I am honoured and grateful to assume the reins of the Editor-in-chief (EIC) of *JCAG* with this issue of the journal. In *JCAG*, the founding editor Dr. John Marshall created a tremendous resource for the Canadian gastroenterology community. Its values and ambitions are those of the Canadian Association of Gastroenterology (CAG); to provide clinical guidance to members of our community while promoting the advancement of science in gastroenterology. It is difficult to envision a CAG journal without Dr. Marshall at its helm. We are tremendously grateful to him for his leadership and dedication since *JCAG*'s creation, and I recognize that I have very large shoes to fill.

My vision for *JCAG* is as a leading outlet for important and impactful gastrointestinal research for clinicians, researchers and patients from Canada and internationally, while maintaining the highest levels of scientific rigour, transparency and openness. *JCAG* has “punched above its weight” since its inception. It has quickly surpassed the impact of the previous CAG journal. As EIC, I will build on these successes while expanding *JCAG*'s rigour, transparency and impact by endorsing the Open Science movement (1). The current Open Access publishing model is the first step toward this goal; however, it is not enough. Authors will be encouraged to use reporting guidelines appropriately (2), openly publish their raw or aggregate data, and transparently declare their financial and intellectual conflicts of interest. Peer reviewers (including GI trainees) can be taught to better evaluate manuscripts. The Editorial Board will work together to prioritize research for publication while transparently reporting our own relationships. Finally, the publisher should facilitate active collaboration amongst Editorial Board members and provide an accessible outlet for raw data availability. As EIC, I will make Open Science a priority for the next stage of *JCAG*'s development.

A journal is only as strong as the volunteers who edit, manage and peer review its content. We have a very dedicated Editorial Board, comprising volunteers from various facets of Canadian gastroenterology. We will work toward diversifying our Editorial Board to include allied health professionals and international members to provide a greater breadth of expertise and experience. We will uphold the Canadian values of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (DEI&A) (3), ensuring diversity in our Editorial Board, and that DEI&A standards are upheld for the articles published in *JCAG* (4,5). We will launch this initiative with an exciting and informative DEI&A educational event at

the *JCAG* Symposium at this year's Canadian Digestive Diseases Week in Halifax. We hope you can join us to learn about the importance of DEI&A in medical research and publishing.

Engaging and training the next generation is one of CAG's primary aims, and *JCAG* will follow suit. We are excited to partner with the TRIANGLE (TRaIning A New generation of researchers in Gastroenterology and LivEr) Program (6) for new training initiatives. We will establish a *JCAG* Peer-Review Training Program and an Editorial Board Fellowship to allow our best Canadian GI trainees and junior faculty to gain hands-on experience in the medical publishing world. We will announce further details soon.

Another major goal of the journal is to obtain a Journal Impact Factor and inclusion in the Journal Citation Reports, thereby increasing the visibility of *JCAG* as a publishing outlet for Canadian and international researchers and clinicians. Obtaining an Impact Factor will require diversification of the authorship base and editorial staff. We will continue to build bridges to researchers, clinicians, editors and publishers in Canada and abroad to build new collaborations and expand our reach.

Of course, we cannot achieve this goal without your continued support. CAG members and *JCAG* readers have strongly supported our journal by submitting their articles to *JCAG*, despite the highly crowded medical publishing and gastroenterology journal space. Please continue to submit your papers! Through my career, and the experience of hundreds of manuscript rejections, I have learned that every manuscript has a “home”. *JCAG* is your “home-team” journal; we hope you will continue to view it as a favourable space for your manuscripts. Similarly, you have been very generous with your time as peer-reviewers. It is becoming increasingly difficult to find peer-reviewers for manuscripts, and the pandemic has compounded this problem due to competing clinical and administrative pressures. CAG members and *JCAG* readers have been remarkably generous with accepting peer review invitations, even over the past three years. I hope you will continue to dedicate your time, knowledge and expertise as peer reviewers. We promise to work toward making the peer review process as smooth and enriching as possible, partly by ensuring that the manuscripts you receive for review are well-written, transparent and scientifically rigorous.

I am looking forward to assuming the role of EIC of *JCAG*, especially with the strong foundation established by Dr.

Marshall and the Editorial Board, and the invaluable partnership with Oxford University Press. I welcome your suggestions on how to make *JCAG* better. Please feel free to contact me with your ideas, thoughts and suggestions. With this transition, we will fulfill the Biblical saying: “From Strength to Strength May We Be Strengthened” and continue to strive to make *JCAG* a banner journal for clinicians and researchers in gastroenterology in Canada and worldwide.

### Data Availability

There are no data associated with this manuscript.

### REFERENCES

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