

Opening remarks from the new editor



D. M. Thappa

“I cannot say whether things will get better if we change; what I can say is they must change if they are to get better.”

G. C. Lichtenberg

It is with great pride that I begin my term as the 9th editor of the *Indian Journal of Dermatology, Venereology and Leprology (IJDVL)*. The journal is changing hands after the successful and admirable editorship of Dr. Uday Khopkar. My association with IJDVL goes back almost a decade, and although I am familiar with the general functioning of the journal, I would like to thank the selection committee of the Indian Association of Dermatologists, Venereologists and Leprologists for selecting me as Editor Elect in January 2008 to study in detail the working of the journal, its processing and how decisions are arrived at. In the last 1 year, my predecessor, Dr. Uday Khopkar, has involved me in various processes related to the working of the journal so that the transition may be a smooth one. He has set undeniably high standards for the journal and was instrumental in getting IJDVL indexed in Index Medicus, Science Citation Index Expanded and many other databases. Under his excellent leadership, the submission process of articles has been made a paperless online submission system, allowing me to comfortably work from Pondicherry, from a small room, with the journal publishing headquarters continuing to be in Mumbai.

The foundation of this journal was laid by Dr. U. B.

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Narayan Rao in 1935-36, under the name “Indian Journal of Venereal Diseases.” In 1940, the name changed to “Indian Journal of Venereal Diseases and Dermatology,” and in 1947, to the “Indian Journal of Dermatology and Venereology.” On amalgamation of the Indian Association of Dermatologists and Venereologists with other dermatology associations to form the Indian Association of Dermatologists, Venereologists and Leprologists, the name of the journal was changed to Indian Journal of Dermatology, Venereology and Leprology. Dr. S. C. Desai was the first editor of IJDVL, followed by Dr. Bhaktavizam, Dr. (Mrs.) Rachel Mathai, Dr. J. S. Pasricha, Dr. S. G. Deshpande, Dr. Gurmohan Singh, Dr. K. Pavithran and Dr. Uday Khopkar.

Medknow Publications have provided useful inputs to improve the quality of the journal and bring it on par with other reputed international journals. One of the major plus points for IJDVL is its unlimited free online access, which improves the worldwide visibility of the journal. In order to streamline the manuscript submission process, the “instructions to the authors” have been revised to help authors in proper submission of their articles. Improper submission in many ways is the cause for avoidable delays in the processing of articles. Our journal is set to become a member of CrossRef. This is a cross-publisher citation linking system that allows a researcher to click on a reference citation on one publisher’s platform and link directly to the cited content on another publisher’s platform, subject to the target publisher’s access control practices.

There are some issues that are tormenting the medical journals, including IJDVL, that continue to be a problem. These include ethical matters such

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as publication bias, authorship criteria, ghost writing, falsification of data/photographs, statistical manipulation, duplicate publication, plagiarism and conflict of interest. I have a desire to discuss this subject in the coming issues of IJDVL. For sponsored supplements, we need to adopt strict educational and scientific criteria to make them worthy of publication.

In keeping with the pace of developments occurring in the field of dermatology, I have introduced a new section on "Current Best Evidence," which discusses relevant articles from current literature. Because clinical dermatology is based on the concept of pattern recognition, and images no doubt play an important role in arriving at a diagnosis, "Images in Clinical Practice," a new section, has been brought in. The internal layout of articles in the journal has been modified to facilitate better readability and the external appearance has also been changed, as you

will see in the coming issues. Although the electronic media has overtaken the print media the world over, people in India are crazy about having a copy of the journal. In this regard, the distribution network has to be streamlined.

In this new endeavor as an editor, I look forward to the same amount of cooperation from the esteemed senior members of our association, my fellow dermatologists, teachers and postgraduates. The success of the journal depends on your contributions and I urge all members to think of IJDVL for the publication of their finest research work. I invite everyone to actively participate in the functioning of the journal, if not by submission of articles by way of participation in the evaluation and review of articles by becoming a reviewer for our journal. Last but not the least, the journal, as always, welcomes useful suggestions and constructive criticism from its readers.