

Injury Prevention at 20

Brian D Johnston

It is with great pleasure that I call your attention to a milestone in our journal's history. This issue marks the first of our 21st volume, meaning that *Injury Prevention* is now 20 years old!

The journal will be celebrating a number of ways. Those reading the print edition will already have noted the new cover design. We offered our readers an opportunity to vote, via social media, on one of three designs, and what you see here was the clear favourite. It is vexingly difficult to come up with an abstract representation of injury prevention. This design, at least, suggests caring hands and the lifespan focus of the journal.

We are also reprinting a 'classic' paper from the journal in each issue this year. These classics were nominated by readers and selected by our editorial board as papers with a lasting impact in the field. Some represent ground-breaking science or innovative methodologies. Others ask provocative, novel questions or propose models useful in planning or pedagogy. All have been influential in ways that transcend typical measure of academic impact. We are proud to reprint them here for a new generation of readers in our 'Anniversary Archives'.

We have also asked members of our current editorial board, working pairs, to read and reflect on these classic papers. We think you'll find their insights interesting. We lead off this month with a reprint of Rivara and the Thompsons' 'Epidemiology of bicycle injuries and risk factors for serious injury', originally published in 1997.¹ Don't miss the linked editorial by Beth Ebel and Brent Hagel.²

Finally, you'll also find in this issue a discussion among three individuals who were instrumental in the launch of the journal in 1995.³ They recall its genesis at the second world conference on injury control in Atlanta, explain its enduring close ties to the International Society for Child and Adolescent Injury Prevention and offer some thoughts about its future.

Correspondence to Dr Brian D Johnston, Pediatrics, University of Washington, Seattle, WA 98104, USA; ipeditor@bmjgroup.com

What does the future look like to me? At age 20, the journal is doing very well. We continue to look for the best manuscripts in violence and injury control from around the globe and across all age groups. Our acceptance rate for original science hovers around 18%, and the impact factor has inched up to 1.94. More importantly, we continue to see submissions of remarkable breadth and quality, many from junior authors in established research programmes or from new colleagues in rapidly developing areas, such as China and the global South. This bodes well for the future of the field and the several journals that now serve it.

As a discipline, we continue to struggle with some important issues. How do we recognise, model, study and—hopefully—intervene upon the complex and dynamic systems that generate injury risk and outcomes?⁴ How far afield do we reach to embrace the perspectives of other disciplines and traditions that might have more to offer than our current tools of inquiry?⁵ And how do we translate their understanding into terms and approaches that we can use, measure and report in a manner acceptable to our biomedical and public health traditions?⁶ Where do we draw the limits of injury prevention in terms of injury mechanism or injury severity?⁷ Finally, recognising that complex systems are interrelated, how do we anticipate the impact that injury control interventions may have on other, equally important, sectors and their goals? Can we use these interrelationships to our benefit while avoiding parochialism and territorial bickering?

These are thorny questions with no easy answers. Their resolution will shape the nature and focus of our shared intellectual effort. I am confident that the journal will play a role in fostering and facilitating these discussions.

I want to close, on behalf of Dr. Barry Pless (our founding editor) and myself, with a note of profound gratitude. Thank you to BMJ Journals, our publisher from the outset, whose careful guidance and support, along with a willingness to take

chances on our small and relatively neglected corner of the biomedical sciences, has been crucial to our ongoing survival and success. Thank you also to the many women and men who, over the years, have served on our editorial board or as trusted associated editors. Their imprint on the journal is clear and positive, and we are privileged to count them as far-flung friends as well as colleagues. Finally, thanks most of all to you, our readers. It is a privilege to serve as editor of this publication precisely because, in fact, it belongs to all of us. *Injury Prevention* exists as a tangible manifestation of the passion and energy, dedication and thoughtful deliberation that each of you brings to our diverse and active field. The questions of method and focus, priority and technique, that play out in these pages are not sterile academic arguments. They reflect the shifting interests and awareness of our still-developing discipline and the various contributions that our authors, peer reviewers and readers bring to that endeavour. It is good work, done well.

Thank you all!

Twitter Follow Brian Johnston at @bdj8824

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