The great paradox of injury prevention is that we already know much about what works but have yet to discover the most effective way to implement what we know. Part of the

answer lies in discovering how to make what is now a multidisciplinary process one that is essentially interdisciplinary.

Classics . . . and thanks, again!

This issue includes the second of a series of injury prevention classics. These 'classics' are copies of papers the editors believe to be important in our field, but which are unlikely to be easily available to most readers because they were published long ago. (At our home an occasional dinner table debate concerns whether something can be properly termed a 'classic' if it is not very old. The semantic purist among us — me — argues that at best, such items should be designated as 'destined to be a classic'.) This aside, our goal for this section is to identify papers that have shaped our ideas, and which more often than not are 'old' by standards of the still young field of injury prevention.

Considering these requirements, it is not surprising but nevertheless sad, that the author of this issue's classic, Stina Sandels, and that which appeared in the previous issue, William Haddon, are both now dead. I hope they would be pleased to know that among their many other important contributions, these papers have now been singled out, and, in a sense, 'immortalized'. Doing so not only helps us as readers, but is also our way of saying thanks to them and the other pioneers who struggled to bring a message to a largely unreceptive audience. We welcome suggestions of similar papers for this honour.

Writing this explanation provides me with an opportunity to deliver a related message. It is that we should all make more of an effort to acknowledge our debts to our older colleagues while they are still alive. We live in a society that eschews reference to death. It is almost as if we fear it will bring bad luck if we break this taboo. But we must struggle to overcome this foolish notion.

At the conference that launched the journal, we paid tribute to Ragnar Berfernstam and Hugh Jackson, and do so again in print. Both are justly recognized as pioneers —

Founding Fathers — and there are Founding Mothers as well — Sandels, is one, and Sue Baker another. This is not just a sentimental suggestion; there is a scientific issue as well. In acknowledging the need for better interdisciplinary relationships as a means to better implementation, we should also recognize the need to maintain strong links with the past. We must not overlook important contributions simply because they are old. Many need to be unearthed, dusted off, re-examined, and sometimes, replicated.

Sandels helped us understand how developmental phenomena are intimately linked with the child's risk of injury in traffic. Why then do some schools still assume 6 year olds can cross roads in a school zone without adult supervision? Jackson showed that child resistant containers prevent poisoning. Why then do many health authorities permit medicines to be dispensed in unsafe containers? Berfernstam demonstrated, as did Haddon, that attention to the environment was a key to effective prevention, especially of pedestrian injuries. Why then do many urban planners continue to give pride of place to cars and ignore the needs of children?

The point is that neither front line workers nor researchers can afford to lose track of our history. There is not enough research money or energy to reinvent the wheel, and although many studies demand replication, others stand alone. It is not just sentiment that should prompt us to thank our elders while they are still able to hear our thanks firsthand. By doing so we help maintain a tradition of excellence in our work and in our research.

IB PLESS
Editor