

Supporting a community of injury prevention giants: past, present and future

Caroline F Finch 

There is a well-known saying that talks about the progression of scientific knowledge and insights being built from the 'standing on the shoulders of giants'.¹ There is no doubt that as a field, injury prevention is only in the strong position it is today because we have done the same. *Injury Prevention* is committed to progressing this by having a focus on preserving injury prevention history, sharing this with new generations of injury researchers and shaping the field. Knowledge and recognition about injury prevention's giants and their contributions must not be lost and our journal will take a leadership role in ensuring this through targeted papers in issues, a new journal podcast series, our social media presence and curated discussions among our authors and readers. One of those giants passed in August 2023: Dr. Ivan Barry Pless was this journal's inaugural Editor-in-Chief and Professor Emeritus at McGill University. In this issue, we celebrate his contributions and provide an opportunity for our readers to add their voices to those who directly or indirectly benefited from his leadership in paediatrics, injury prevention and epidemiology.²

Throughout my own research career, I have had a solid history of publication that has always been based on the strongest standards of research and professional integrity. I have always very much enjoyed scientific writing myself and have great passion for engendering the skills and values for this in more junior researchers and our practitioner colleagues. Together with members of our senior editorial board team, *Injury Prevention* will contribute to the active development and mentoring of the future workforce of injury prevention professionals and researchers.

Injury Prevention is the leading journal for disseminating information about public-health-focused injury prevention efforts to reduce the burden of injury in all age groups around the world (<https://injuryprevention.bmj.com>). It has held this enviable position since its inception in 1995. As an international peer-reviewed

journal, it publishes original research, opinion, debate and special features on the prevention of unintentional and intentional (violence-related) injuries from a public health perspective across multiple settings and contexts. It is particularly focused on:

- ▶ Furthering data-driven evidence to inform policy and practice responses, and ensuring that the research is informed by the needs of non-academic partners.
- ▶ Improving understanding of, and perceptions around, risks and the preventability of injuries.
- ▶ Documenting both implementation challenges and success stories to provide robust evidence to demonstrate that injury prevention efforts have real-world impact.

Injury Prevention is, therefore, committed to the publication, discussion and dissemination of research to academics, the injury prevention practitioner workforce and the general community. Providing avenues to connect injury prevention practitioners and professionals to the latest research knowledge is essential if we are to collectively continue to reduce both the local impacts and global burden of injury. Dissemination of high-quality research to inform injury prevention efforts around the world is one of the areas in which *Injury Prevention* excels.

As Editor-in-Chief, I have a firm commitment to the publication and dissemination of highly relevant and impactful research to both academics as well as to the injury prevention practitioner workforce and the general community. Our journal is adopting a multifaceted approach that includes:

- ▶ Ensuring journal relevancy for its target audiences, media and promotions, including its social media presence.
- ▶ Advocacy for the journal and its published research in key forums (the World Conference on Injury Prevention and Safety Promotion series and our association with the Society for Advancement of Violence and Injury Research).

- ▶ Demonstrated support for the publication of high-quality research.
- ▶ Continual assessment of the content focus and refining it if necessary, developing a strategy for the best mix of publication types.
- ▶ Encouraging the publication of items from diverse world regions, by cross-country groups of researchers and from practitioners together with researchers.
- ▶ Editorial board composition and pool of expert reviewers, while ensuring and respecting quality, quantity and diversity.

Publication of leading-edge research and providing a credible platform for robust discussion about it will be a key role for *Injury Prevention*. The best science is forged with the rigour of peer review and debate.

Going forward, *Injury Prevention* will continue its leadership role in supporting the global injury prevention research endeavour. This will include attention to key emerging areas as they apply to injury prevention, including:

- ▶ Data science/big data/artificial intelligence and machine learning—extending the journal beyond the more traditional injury surveillance focus only it has had in the past, while recognising and continuing its international leadership in surveillance and data systems.
- ▶ Health and safety literacy—especially around improved understandings of, and perceptions around, risks and the preventability of injuries, a continual challenge for our field as already highlighted in our journal.
- ▶ Documenting both implementation challenges and success stories to provide new types of robust evidence to demonstrate that injury prevention efforts have real-world impact (eg, through implementation science approaches).
- ▶ Mixed-methods research that adds depth to quantitative analyses with the insights from lived experience of injury and violence survivors and the practitioners who support them.

There are certainly challenges that the journal must also address to ensure its ongoing relevance and responsiveness to the rapidly changing context of international publishing, peer review and research dissemination.³ The global impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has rapidly accelerated how the world and academics both think about and value the dissemination of scientific knowledge.⁴ Through the thought leadership of our editorial board

Correspondence to Professor Caroline F Finch, Chancellor, Edith Cowan University, Joondalup, WA 6027, Australia; c.finch@ecu.edu.au

members and others, we will encourage debate and developments linked to publishing issues that have particularly come to the foreground in the past couple of years. These will include:

- ▶ Supporting initiatives that address Open Science (not just open access publication of findings but also of data and source materials), including initiatives such as Plan S.
- ▶ Authorship integrity and the use of generative artificial intelligence—see the new *BMJ* policy on the latter.⁵
- ▶ Improving inclusion and diversity—including the decolonisation of research knowledge and its assessment.
- ▶ The burden of the current peer-review system on academics and reward mechanisms for this important work—see the editorial by associate editor Louis-Rachid Salmi in this issue for his thoughts on this aspect.⁶
- ▶ A declining trust in academic publishing houses and in expert opinion from such sources.
- ▶ Consideration of publication times and different publication types, including preprints, while ensuring and their assured quality and research integrity.

Over the past three decades, our field has formalised its core concepts and its methods, while greatly expanding the reach of those methods in terms of evidence-based public health innovation. This journal has provided a forum for much of that innovation. Its only natural to speculate how injury prevention (the field and the journal) will evolve over the next three decades. Obviously, no-one can predict with certainty the future

directions of injury prevention research and the emerging injury problems that will be addressed by our emerging and future research leaders. However, I can promise that this journal will continue to serve as driver for the most rigorous and innovative science in our field and will continue to be highly responsive to evolving and emerging topics in the field. I am certain that this will require the agility, dedication and effort of all of us—injury prevention giants past, present and future—to ensure that the best of injury prevention science continues to be readily available to the global community of the injury prevention scholars and decision-makers.

Twitter Caroline F Finch @CarolineFinch

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Author note CFF is a world renowned injury prevention researcher who has received international and national recognition for her contributions to the field of injury research. While best known for her leadership in sports injury prevention research, CFF has also conducted injury prevention research drawing on multiple research disciplines including behavioural science, biomechanics, biostatistics, data systems, epidemiology, ergonomics, health promotion, implementation science, psychology, public health, sports medicine, sports science, and public health surveillance methods. Her research and publishing experience has addressed many important injury domains including burns and scalds, childhood injury, cyclist safety, drowning, falls in the elderly, occupational settings, poisonings, road safety, sports

and recreation, trauma and emergency systems. CFF's work has been recognised with an Distinguished International Career Award from the American Public Health Association's Injury Control and Emergency Health Services Section (2015) and the Australasian Injury Prevention Network's (AIPN) 'Special Award for Sustained Achievement in Injury Prevention' (2022). A notable career highlight was receiving an Order of Australia (AO) from the Australian Government in 2018, in recognition of her 'distinguished service to sports medicine, particularly in the area of injury prevention as an educator, researcher and author, and to the promotion of improved health in athletes and those who exercise.' She has served as Editor-in-Chief of *BMJ Injury Prevention* since January 2023.

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ORCID iD

Caroline F Finch <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-1711-1930>

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