

Elder's Editorial

Every profession needs a peer reviewed, professional journal that provides an avenue for the publication of relevant research and clinical information pertinent to that profession. Every profession also needs a forum for lively discussion and debate. It was with a degree of excitement and anticipation that I received the news that the *International Journal of Naturopathic Medicine* was returning after a much missed absence.

Although there are a number of useful publications that have emerged to fill the void, as a profession we have been missing this important, vibrant thread that needs to be woven into the evolving tapestry of a profession "coming of age".

One of the challenges of an emerging, rapidly growing profession is being able to communicate new clinical knowledge, debate theories, and to share clinical experience in a reliable forum. A shared knowledge base helps to define a profession. When the profession was smaller, that was relatively easy to do. Young doctors sat at the feet of the masters and learned firsthand. It did not take long to have a new discovery (or a piece of re-discovered clinical wisdom) infiltrate the small cadre of naturopathic doctors.

Today with a growing number of schools and the development of strong research departments it is necessary to have a common publication that we all refer to in order to keep informed. Research has always been the accepted way for new knowledge to be uncovered and "old knowledge" to be tested. Along with the standard research methodology, those involved in research at our colleges and universities are developing new ways to "conduct research" that is relevant to our profession. The International Journal of Naturopathic Medicine will be a mother lode of reliable information for all practicing naturopathic doctors as the outcomes of these studies are published.

Naturopathic medicine has attracted many brilliant minds that bring to the profession a variety of skills and talents. These individuals often come into the profession with a broad experience base that enriches the profession as

a whole. There are also a growing number of naturopathic doctors who have developed highly successful practices who can share their experience to the benefit of those starting out in practice. We also need to hear from the elders whose knowledge and clinical experience will give important insight and confidence to those in practice, particularly in those areas where we do not have all the answers. All these voices need to be heard.

A profession will only mature as it engages in healthy discussion and debate. Professional formation and the development of a profession's identity require the coming together of many minds to discuss and debate what it is that characterizes the profession. At the Skamania Editors Retreat in the spring of 2007, sponsored by the Foundations of Naturopathic Medicine Project, the concept of "metaparadigm" (most global "worldview" of the profession) was put forward. A metaparadigm allows for a variety of clinical theories to emerge that may differ in ways from each other but fit within the overall metaparadigm. With such a variety of therapies and modalities used by naturopathic doctors, and the variety of the "ways of practicing" naturopathic medicine in everyday practice, it is important that naturopathic medical students are grounded in naturopathic clinical theory. But what are the most significant theories that form the basis for naturopathic medical practice? These are the discussions that must be ongoing, communicated and recorded. I can think of no better place than within this kind of publication.

The re-publication of *IntJNM* is a landmark . . . another important milestone in the evolution of our profession. Drs. Seely and Tallman are to be congratulated on this ambitious project and deserve the support and thanks of the profession internationally.

Sincerely,

Don Warren, ND, DHANP