



Thomas C. Meyer, MD

Editorial

Few takers on theme allows chance to clear backlog

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We had hoped to have this issue of the *Journal* related to Rural Health, but very few papers on that topic were submitted so it was decided that this was a good opportunity to “clear the backlog” of accepted manuscripts again. What has evolved is an issue packed with items of interest and some peering into what is yet to come in medical practice.

We are grateful, once again, for Sue Ann Thompson, for her perceptive and stirring guest editorial (p 11) outlining the success of the Badger Heart Program, which is devoted to improving health literacy and helping women make lifestyle changes. We can do little but echo her dictum that “a healthy woman means a healthy family.” Details of the Program are in the Sanchez/Khalil report (p 24).

Equally as important is the report on the Genetic Services Plan for Wisconsin (p 13) by Henry, Pauli and Katcher, with details available at www.slh.wisc.edu/genetics—10 minutes well spent in deciding what types of patients and families would benefit from genetic counselling and how to find the appropriate referral mechanism. Linked to this, albeit remotely, is the thoughtful (and somewhat alarming) introduction to Gene-Based Drug Prescribing by Drs Musana and Wilke (p 61), which also requires “fighting through” the alphabet soup of current genetics to provide some insight as to why, among other things, some patients react well to some drug regimes whereas others react badly or not at all!

The sole peer-reviewed paper on the subject of Rural Health derives from that mine of carefully considered studies that come from the Marshfield Epidemiologic Research Center. This time the authors look at the beneficial effects of vacations on rural women (p 20)—surely some of the hardest-working of any gender group.

A series of three “surgical” papers from various parts of the state provide reassurance that difficult invasive procedures are able to show beneficial results when performed here in Wisconsin. Guzzo and colleagues report their success in performing six complex GI procedures in the Gunderson Lutheran Medical Center with results that compare favorably with centers nationwide and allow them to raise questions about the current dogma that asserts that such procedures should only be done in high volume medical centers (p 30). Dr Kawakami and his colleagues report their experience with deep brain stimulation of the subthalamic nucleus in selected patients with Parkinson’s disease (p 35), though one has to contend with more unfamiliar alphabet soup to grasp the import of the report. Finally, from the Marshfield Clinic, Dr Bryce and colleagues report their experience with the controversial intradiscal electrothermal annuloplasty as an alternative in the management of persistent discogenic low back pain (p 39).

Two down-to-earth but nevertheless important studies from the discipline of Family Medicine look

at the dietary calcium intake and supplementation among women and the optimal collection technique and devices to obtain a quality Pap smear. Doctor Schragar and her colleagues are able to assure us that, for once, Wisconsin seems to be doing better in something than other states reported in larger population studies, but they exhort us to continue counselling on the need for calcium and vitamin D. Doctor Marchand provides a timely rerun of the optimal technique and equipment for that all-important Papanicolaou smear technology (p 51).

A case series and review of six cases of “never heard of” central pontine myelinolysis by Drs Murana and Yale allows us to consider the condition in alcoholic patients presenting with bizarre neurological symptoms (p 56). Drs Dincer and Raza’s report of the “Compartment Syndrome” with fatal rhabdomyolysis (p 67) is the first of what we hope to be a regular case report in each issue of the *Journal*.

Finally, I need to draw attention to Dr Frantz’s thoughtful and provocative occasional paper wondering whether it is time to regulate the pharmaceutical industry. He certainly makes a strong case for doing so (p 17). Also of note is Dean Farrell’s agonized plea (p 73) that there be some input from and reward to the medical schools for the determination and distribution of medical student fees and tuition—there is none at present!