Editorial

Past and Present as Prologue

In assuming the role of Editor-in-Chief for the *Journal of Molecular Diagnostics*, I am filled with humility, trepidation, and excitement. It is humbling to follow in Karen Kaul's footsteps. As the inaugural editor of the *JMD*, she exceeded the goals that the leaders of the Association for Molecular Pathology set forth—"to give equal value to new technology and new discoveries, to provide careful validation and comparison of clinical assays, and to promote our growing expertise, as well as that of this fledgling organization, AMP."¹ Karen and her editorial team developed the *JMD* into a journal that remains the first source for definitive information on how to bring molecular diagnosis into clinical practice. It is this success that drives me forward as I take on this challenge.

The excitement that comes with the opportunity to build on this great legacy is accompanied by trepidation that arises from three sources. First, the role of the molecular pathologist within the health professional community is constantly in flux. Our colleagues in the corporate world are developing impressive products that effectively bring certain elements of molecular diagnostics practice into the hands of generalists who, at least presently, are not reading the *JMD*. The changing scope of practice, together with the development of new technologies designed to rapidly characterize the genome, transcriptome, and proteome, challenges the *JMD* editorial team to constantly reexamine content and scope to assure that published papers enable our readers to effectively serve patients, health professionals, and the scientific community. Second, the forms and functions of scientific journals are changing. Although those of us "of a certain age" are familiar with reading bound collections of paper, libraries are dispensing with them for lack of space, and some readers prefer instead to use a computer, for reasons ranging from personal convenience to environmental concerns. More importantly, traditional journals, including most electronic versions, do not take full advantage of the Internet's capabilities to connect different documents and concepts, to provide video illustrations to communicate more effectively than print, or to distribute audio formats that are more convenient and portable for some "readers." Finally, the editorial team, including the sponsoring societies, must remain as aware of

opportunities to use evolving publishing models as they are diligent in bringing forth scientific communications of the highest quality. These tasks are beyond my personal abilities, so I am thankful that Barbara Zehnbauer has agreed to serve as Senior Associate Editor, that Managing Editor Audra Cox and the editorial office are continuing their exceptional work with the *JMD*, and that the Associate Editors, Editorial Board members, and the Joint Journal Oversight Committee will maintain their constant and careful attention to the *JMD*.

The editorial team stands strongly committed to meeting these challenges while increasing the importance, readership, and visibility of the *JMD*. To achieve these goals, we will broaden the *JMD* content to include papers reflecting an earlier stage in the translational pipeline. We wish to reach a broader audience that includes scientists who are developing tools with an impact on diagnosticians who practice molecular pathology "in the trenches." In addition to articles that have been within the traditional scope of the *JMD*, we will encourage those that define technological innovation (both physical and informational), including cross-over technologies such as molecular imaging. The editorial team will also solicit papers that firmly establish the clinical validity and utility of molecular diagnostic methods, including clinical trials and epidemiological investigations. Over time, we will expand the Editorial Board to encourage submissions and facilitate expert review in these areas. We will also actively solicit topical reviews intended to bring advances in molecular diagnostics and diagnostic technology into practical scientific and clinical context. Authors who are interested in submitting a review to the *JMD* should contact the journal office before preparation to assure that it advances the *JMD*'s goals.

We will strive to serve our authors with the same care that we serve our readers. Our commitment to bringing high-quality research to our readers as quickly as possible will be accompanied by efforts to reach a final editorial decision on all submitted manuscripts within 28 days, while assuring that scientific review is helpful to authors. For this we will depend heavily on our Editors, Editorial Board members, and ad hoc reviewers to provide timely, constructive reviews. Further, for

contributions that represent exceptionally important advances, we will strive to accelerate not only review but also publication to assure maximum visibility for authors and rapid availability to readers.

Although the *JMD*'s editorial team is strong, it alone cannot continue the tradition of excellence that the *JMD* has established. We encourage the *JMD*'s readers and authors to share with us their insights on the *JMD*'s successes, missteps, and future directions. Together we can effectively build on the firm founda-

tion of the last 11 years to make a great journal even better.

Timothy J. O'Leary, M.D., Ph.D.
Editor-in-Chief

Reference

1. Kaul KL: A warm farewell. *J Mol Diagn* 2009, 11:495–496