

From the Editor

Good Work

Scholarly publications exist to provide a place for the introduction, scrutiny, and dissemination of new research and other useful information. The content of such publications is of vital importance since it influences the thinking and practices of readers. In their book entitled *Good Work: When Excellence meets Ethics*, Howard Gardner, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (pronounced CHICK-sent-me-high), and William Damon provide insight regarding what constitutes the best possible professional effort in our Modern World, something they refer to as “Good Work” (1). The authors point out that, while ones work may be highly creative and excellent in design, precision, and intellectual appeal, it may still lack value. According to the authors, really good work involves a melding of excellence and ethics to produce genuine value. Selfishness, greed, and lack of concern are the common elements of the antithesis of good work. The authors go on to describe the doers of good work as follows:

“People who do good work, in our sense of the term, are clearly skilled in one or more professional realms. At the same time, rather than merely following money or fame alone, or choosing the path of least resistance when in conflict, they are thoughtful about their responsibilities and the implications of their work.” They go on to remind us that scientists respect work that is scrupulous, honest, open, and original; they honor those among their peers who have carried out the most original and path-breaking work.

The aim of the *Journal* is to be a repository for “good work” related to our field. This year 400 pages have been published in the *Journal* related to the science of extra-corporeal circulation and blood management. This work has been disseminated to readers in twenty-seven countries in four separate issues this year. Good published work produces a stepwise progression of our understanding, it has relevance and it inspires. If our readers find some substantive information from the *Journal* this year that result in some tangible improvement in their understanding, then this has been a successful year for the *Journal*.

It takes immense sustained effort to progress from the conception of an idea or hypothesis to reach the point of a completed manuscript. Such work requires an investment of time, intellect, and perhaps a degree of emotional risk. Many ideas are then rightly or wrongly rejected in the less than perfect process of peer review. I know well the despair of rejected work. Words from a particularly harsh



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reviewer can become trapped in your mind, to be replayed over and over again. A close friend and mentor once told me that his very best work was often rejected at least once before subsequent publication. Research writing is an iterative process that requires persistence, reflection, and revision upon revision. We should not abandon the questions that captivate our interest, rather we should continue in our effort to confront uncertainties.

The peer review process has been the heart of scholarly communication for nearly four centuries. In 1620, Francis Bacon, in the preface of his work *The New Organon*, first describes a framework for the assessment of science as follows:

“I have on my own part made it my care and study that the things which I shall propound should not only be true, but should also be presented to men’s minds, how strangely so ever preoccupied and obstructed, in a manner not harsh or unpleasant . . . but let him examine it thoroughly . . .” (2).

Scholarly societies founded in the seventeenth century published manuscripts in their journals solely on the basis of the editor’s judgment, a frightening thought. In 1731, the Royal Society of Edinburgh embarked on a new process whereby materials were subjected to the inspection of a select group that was knowledgeable of such matters and whose recommendation to the editor was influential in the future progress of that manuscript (3). This remains the accepted methodology of assessing the relevance, veracity, and quality of work submitted for publication. Would you like to participate in this ancient tradition? If you have contributed to the literature and have a particular area of expertise, please visit the *Journal* website and register as a manuscript reviewer (www.JECT.org). Your participation is most welcomed.

The *Journal’s* editorial board is comprised of thirty-eight associate editors from thirteen countries, some of the most brilliant and respected researchers and clinicians in our field. Another distinct quality of editorial board mem-

bers is that, they are among the busiest people on the planet. Nearly all have clinical responsibilities, serve as officers or on committees of professional organizations, many are actively involved in their own research interests, and all strive to squeeze their personal obligations into their daily schedules. They devote countless hours to vetting over manuscripts and provide direction to this editor. Their efforts result in the improvement of submitted work, the exclusion of questionable work, and the publication of quality work. The best reviewers see themselves as “peers” and not as superiors. A good reviewer provides honest and unbiased guidance to the author and the editor. They protect the public by assessing the veracity of the authors’ claims.

While this has been a good year for the *Journal*, we are planning for next year to be even better. It takes far too long for a decision to be made after a manuscript is submitted to the *Journal*. Authors should not have to wait more than one month to receive a decision.

We are taking action to improve our timeliness in the coming year. Beginning with Volume 39, the editorial review process will be moved to a web-based platform. Authors will submit manuscripts through an internet portal and the manuscript will move to reviewers on this web-based system. The review process will be completely automated. Many of the delays and bottlenecks in our current process will be eliminated. The manuscript will be carefully tracked as it moves through the review process

and a complete history of the movement of the manuscript will be recorded. This information will help the reviewers and editorial staff to measure their performance and help them to further improve.

I am pleased to announce that Kay Stammers will be continuing to serve as Managing Editor of the *Journal* in 2007. Her good work this year has been instrumental in making the transition of Editors seamless.

Recently, I noticed the following call to good work from Former United States President, Theodore Roosevelt, printed on the Australasian Society of Cardio-Vascular Perfusion web page (<http://www.perfusion.com.au/>).

“Every man owes a part of his time and money to the business or industry in which he is engaged. No man has the moral right to withhold his support from an organization that is striving to improve conditions within his sphere.”

I wish you all of the very best in your personal and professional endeavors to do good work in 2007.

REFERENCES

1. Howard Gardner. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (pronounced CHICK-sent-me-high), and William Damon. *Good Work: When Excellence and Ethics Meet*. Published by Basic Books, New York, New York, 2002.
2. Bacon F. (1620) “The New Organon or True directions concerning the interpretation of Nature” Available at: http://www.constitution.org/bacon/nov_org.htm (accessed 12/08/06).
3. Spier R. The history of the peer-review process. *Trends Biotechnol.* 2002;20:357–8.