



Dr. John P. O'Keefe

“Working to nurture the active involvement of dental students in our profession is a prime example of an investment in the future.”

Spread Your Wings with Us

A heartwarming communication from a respected colleague is a great way to start the workday. Dr. Ajit Auluck of Mangalore, India, made my day recently with a delightful email message describing his excitement at being contacted for advice by a dental patient in California who had read his article in the online version of *JCDA*.

Commenting on how impressed he was with the publication's global reach and that it is read by the profession and public alike, Dr. Auluck added that interested dental students ought to be lining up to publish articles in *JCDA*. He felt that publishing in *JCDA* had certainly helped him to “spread his wings.” He was speaking from experience, as earlier this year he was invited to present at an international conference in Vienna as a result of an Austrian surgeon reading another article of his in *JCDA*.

Dr. Auluck, who has just completed a master's degree focusing on oral medicine, is representative of the new breed of global *JCDA* author. Since we started publishing author photos with our articles, I have often been impressed by the youthfulness of the contributors and their impressive academic qualifications. I also find it encouraging that our authors come from so many different cultural backgrounds.

Youth and diversity are certainly well-represented among the participants in this year's CDA/Dentsply Student Clinician Program, which is featured prominently in this edition of *JCDA*. Reading the abstracts from this long-established student research competition reveals just how pertinent these research projects are to everyday clinical practice. Based on this evidence, I would certainly hope that many of these students, working closely with their teachers, will be lining up to submit their work to *JCDA*.

The research findings of Susan Conrod, the competition winner, certainly have a potential impact on virtually every dental office in Canada. Although her results were based on a small sample, the recommendation to sterilize all new burs and endodontic files before use, and to perhaps consider them as single-use instruments unless more rigorous sterilization procedures can be devised, gives me pause for thought. Finding the pragmatic balance between patient safety and practice efficiency can never be far from the mind of all practitioners.

After the competition, I had an opportunity to chat with Susan (who comes from a well-known Nova Scotia dental family) about her project, life as a dental student at Dalhousie University, and her future career aspirations to become an oral and maxillofacial surgeon. Obviously well tutored at home and in school, my impression was that of a future leader of our profession in the making. I feel very thankful to the Canadian Dental Association and Dentsply that such young leaders can meet and network with peers and other members of our profession through this competition.

With its goal to increase student involvement in the advancement of the dental profession, the competition is a great example of our Association, in collaboration with a valued industry partner and Canada's dental schools, investing in the long-term health of our profession. When I am asked what CDA does for members, I believe the answer is “lots,” but often in silent ways over a long period of time. Working in partnership to nurture the active involvement of dental students in our profession is a prime example of such an investment in the future.

Ajit Auluck and Susan Conrod come from different parts of the world, but they have both contributed to and benefited from CDA. I thank them and their young colleagues for their commitment to our profession. The more colleagues that actively engage with our institutions, the richer will be our profession and the public we are privileged to serve. Spreading our wings together, ignoring all boundaries, we can soar to great heights as a profession.

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