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In This Issue...

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EDITORIALS

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In This Issue . . .

I am once again pleased to offer readers the next issue of the *International Journal of Aquatic Research and Education*. As I have echoed in recent issues, I continue to be pleased with the terrific strides forward I (and others) see the *Journal* making. More and stronger research papers are being submitted, revised, and published. Our core of reviewers gets larger and more rigorous and constructive in their reviews. Our Editorial Board has become more international in its composition. I continue to get interest from other world aquatic authorities who are willing to serve in the future. At the World Conference on Drowning Prevention 2011 held this past May in Danang, Vietnam (see my editorial in this issue), I was pleased by the tremendous interest in the *Journal* as well as the many compliments offered about the important role *IJARE* is playing on the world aquatic stage. International Life Saving Federation President, Steve Beerman, even went so far as to highlight the *Journal* during his presidential address and to introduce me to the assembled 400 delegates, encouraging them to consider *IJARE* as a publication outlet.

Such heady stuff as all this progress could lead to complacency. Fear not. We still have many important goals to achieve. I continually get questions from authors and University personnel committees about *IJARE*'s "impact factor." I confess to having a strong personal bias *against* such numeric scores intended to quantify journal quality. I believe that they create an unnecessary sense of inter-serial competition, that they are biased against new and niche journals, and that they represent overly simplistic composite scores which the measurement literature long has documented as *invalid* and *unreliable*. Because personnel committees at many universities, in my opinion, foolishly require their faculty to report the impact scores of journals in which faculty publish rather than seek more diagnostic measures of manuscript quality, *IJARE* needs to provide this information or risk forcing young aquatic authors to seek other less appropriate publication outlets.

Similarly, *IJARE* needs to be more widely indexed. Second only to requests about impact factors are inquiries about *IJARE* being indexed by PubMed, Medline, and other biomedical and behavioral citation indices. Human Kinetics did apply for *IJARE*'s inclusion within PubMed and Medline this past year, but our application was denied (unfortunately without any feedback or even reporting our score so we could understand why we were rejected). We can, and will, reapply in two years, the next time our application will be reviewed. I think it is important to note that *IJARE* is already indexed in *Current Abstracts*, *EBSCO host* including *SPORT Discus* with Full Text and *TOC Premier*, *Global Health*, *Leisure, Recreation and Tourism Abstracts*, and *Leisure Tourism Database*. In the meantime, we will seek other indices so that the excellent work being published will be more widely noted and available online to researchers and clinicians around the world.

I do intend to continue with my personal philosophy of "developmental editing." I fully realize that I am trying to swim against a tide (hopefully not a rip tide – note the Media Review at the end of this issue!) because most other journals take what I consider a more negative editorial orientation of "accept or reject." Although the

aquatic research literature is making continual progress as evidenced by the quantity and quality of *IJARE*'s articles, aquatic and swimming research is still a relatively nascent field that requires continual nurturing. As I have pronounced on numerous occasions, if we had taken a more traditional editorial approach and rejected rather than requiring "revise, revise some more, revise yet again" approach with many early authors, *IJARE* would not be in existence today for lack of sufficient manuscripts. I realize we need to continually strive for greater rigor, but I wish to resist the temptation to reject potentially publishable aquatic manuscripts especially from inexperienced and international authors simply to increase our rejection rate to look better for impact scores and receive more prestigious indexing. I hope I am not an aquatic Don Quixote tilting at entrenched publishing windmills.

In This Issue

In this third issue of the fifth volume, readers will discover a continuing theme on drowning and drowning prevention. As with previous issues, this was not an *a priori* theme, but an emergent topic arising from the submitted manuscripts ready for publication. I assure prospective authors that any and all noncompetitive aquatic topics such as recreational water illnesses, aquatic exercise, aquatic therapy, swimming instruction and pedagogy, and other aspects of water safety are always welcome.

The issue starts with my editorial on the relationships of learning to swim and acquiring water competence to drowning and drowning prevention, obviously inspired by the World Conference on Drowning Prevention that I attended in May 2011. I would welcome reactions to what may be my "radical" proposition that no one truly possesses an ability to swim, but that it is a dynamic state that emerges (and re-emerges as well as dissipates) from the complex interactions among individual capabilities, task goals, and aquatic environmental conditions.

A letter to the editor, "A Snapshot of Swimmer Hygiene Behavior," from Chris Wiant, the Chair of the Water Quality & Health Council, reports on a recent survey his committee completed illustrating that too many bathers are not following basic hygiene rules when entering public swimming pools. A copy of the letter appears on the public website for the *International Journal of Aquatic Research and Education* that can be accessed at <http://journals.humankinetics.com/ijare>. The Council was keen that as many people as possible be alerted to the apparent widespread lack of hygienic behavior in our swimming pools.

We are publishing a second "letter" as a "response" because two previous authors, John Hunsucker and Scott Davison, have written a reaction to the response by Wernicki et al. (2011), taking exception with many of the criticisms levied against their original article (2010) in which they proposed an in water intervention (IWI). I hope readers will read the original article (Hunsucker & Davison, 2010, pp 186-198) and the response to it (Wernicki et al., 2011, pp. 6-13) as you consider the current rejoinder. I noted the authors' dismay that the original response had appeared within the "Research Articles" section of 5(1). As editor I take responsibility for that oversight. It indeed should have appeared in a separate section as a "response," *not* a research article.

The first research article in the current issue, "Where the Evidence and Expert Opinion Meet: A Review of Open-Water Recreational Safety Messages," comes

from an esteemed group representing the International Task Force on Open Water Drowning Prevention. Kevin Moran, University of Auckland, Linda Quan and Elizabeth (Tizzy) Bennett, Seattle Children's Hospital, and Richard Franklin, James Cook University, have reported on their work to identify a common world-wide set of water safety and drowning prevention messages using both expert opinion and scientific evidence. I think readers will find it an important and interesting approach for creating user-friendly safety messages that can be supported by both science and experts. A presentation based on this article was featured at the World Conference on Drowning Prevention in May 2011 and was quite well received.

Research drawn from the second research article also was presented at the World Conference on Drowning Prevention in Danang by the lead author, Orapin Laosee, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand. The paper, "Predictors of Swimming Skill of Primary School Children in Rural Thailand, was co-authored by Julie Gilchrist, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; Jiraporn Khiewyoo, Khon Kean University; and Ratana Somrongthong and Chitr Sitthi-amorn, both of Chulalongkorn University. Their study employed surveys of parents of children from rural villages in Thailand. They discovered a number of interesting relationships among factors that were associated with perceived swimming skill and risk of drowning. It is an important study because it addresses one potential approach to drowning prevention in low and middle income countries where drowning is particularly prevalent.

The final research article is a lengthy, descriptive study, "Drowning Deaths in the Nearshore Marine Waters of the Island of Kauai, Hawaii 1970-2009," authored by Charles (Chuck) Blay of TEOK Investigations. As indicated by the title, the study presents information spanning almost 40 years regarding fatal drownings associated with the oceans and beaches of the island of Kauai. It is unique in its level of detail and description about the beaches and their characteristics that lend increased risk to drownings along with the author's proposal for addressing the drowning risks.

This issue features an educational article by our frequent contributor, Stathis Avramidis. Stathis has become very interested in how swimming and drowning are represented in art from around the world. In "World Art on Swimming" we gain an international glimpse at the many ways that artists have provided us with historical information about swimming. For example, I was interested to learn that art from antiquity suggests that the over-arm crawl stroke may not be new in the early twentieth century, but may instead date back thousands of years.

The issue concludes with a brief media review that I composed on *Dr. Rip's Essential Beach Book*, a copy of which was gifted to me by the author, Rob Brander, during the World Conference on Drowning Prevention. It was quite an interesting and quick read, which I accomplished on my trip home from Vietnam. I decided to share the information compiled by Rob on beaches around the world. He thinks that people should know more about the delights and dangers associated with surf beaches and I concur.

Until our next issue, good reading.

*Steve Langendorfer, Editor
International Journal of Aquatic Research and Education*