

FROM THE EDITOR

Support garments and bracing for spinal disorders are complex and often confusing for clinicians. In my experience, patients are often dissatisfied with their orthoses. This dissatisfaction may arise from a variety of issues and complaints regarding the patient's inability or unwillingness to tolerate discomfort (skin irritations, pressure areas, and limitations in motion). Questions frequently posed by clinicians are, "Does the discomfort arise from a poorly fitted orthosis, from an inappropriate prescription, or from a mechanical or soft tissue problem unique to the patient?"

Complaints regarding the perceived usefulness or uselessness of the orthosis for the problem is another issue facing clinicians. Is the patient actually wearing the orthosis long enough for an adequate trial? Does the orthosis fit properly for the diagnosis and is the patient able to don the orthosis for an appropriate fit? These were some of the issues and questions I have had as we developed this issue. These areas, we have found, are difficult to address but we hope the reader will gain usable clinical material from this issue.

Gary Goldish, MD leads off the issue with a thorough overview of commonly used spinal orthoses. In two separate papers, W.H. Kirkaldy-Willis, MD et al., and Duane Saunders, MS, PT discuss the more controversial elastic supports and body suits from somewhat different perspectives. In addition Kirkaldy-Willis, MD graciously

agreed to write a thought provoking foreword dealing with the issue of how much of the effectiveness of the support garment is dependent upon the caring prescription of the physician and therapist.

Joe Fortin, DO then discusses sacroiliac joint dysfunction diagnosis, management, and rehabilitation including use of orthoses. Patients with osteoporosis and osteoporotic vertebral compression fractures are often referred to the physiatrist and therapist for pain management and orthotic prescription. Dr. Rebecca Tanner with the assistance of Drs. Mueller and Ostermann, addresses this tough clinical issue.

Leaving the back but maintaining our bracing theme, we have included an excellent "must read" review article on ankle bracing following sports injuries by Ralph Buschbacher, MD of Indiana University. Finally, a brief but interesting case report of low back pain caused by juxtafacet cysts provided by Gregg Singer, MD.

This issue is a landmark issue for *JBMR* with its first installment of an editorial written specifically for us! Who has a better way with words than Ernest Johnson, MD of Ohio State University? We are grateful for his always stimulating comments. (Dr. Johnson, please do not count how many times "orthotic" is used as a noun rather than an adjective in this issue.)

Karen S. Rucker, MD, Editor