

Letter to the Editors

Looking back, moving forward...

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A professional journal entitled with these words – ‘*Advances in Communication and Swallowing*’ – prompts the awakening and inspiration of ideas, providing a much-needed psychological lift out of COVID-lockdown days, that for this reader, is similar to the lift that comes with bright rays of sunshine.

Scientific academic journals are important. They represent the dedicated efforts of editors and editorial teams who recognise opportunities to encourage, support and promote scientific thought and development. The sharing of research knowledge is a responsibility of those who are educated to undertake and develop research and present it for publication via the accepted scientific standard of peer review. Clinical practitioners benefit hugely, not only informing their practice, but also in providing models of enquiry to inspire clinicians’ own research ideas.

In 1991, Speech and Language Therapy education in Ireland was 22 years old and had been incorporated at university level in Trinity College Dublin since 1979. Education of therapists had been modelled, generously regulated and professionally supported by the UK professional body, the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists (RCSLT). The Irish region of the UK body had direct access to UK membership of the RCSLT, with access to its respected journal (then the *British Journal of Disorders of Communication*). European Union (EU) regulations directed that the national professional body in each EU country had to regulate its professional education,

so the IASLT assumed this responsibility from 1992. In preparation for this momentous change, leading to increasing autonomy for Irish education of SLTs, work towards publishing our own professional journal began, and the *Journal of Clinical Speech and Language Studies* was established. Its production relied upon having available research work from graduates, practitioners and respected scholars, an editorial staff whose responsibility was (at times) onerous, and the support of professional organisations to achieve publication and registration.

Publishing research work in a registered journal means that the work has been subject to peer review that makes it trustworthy, and ready to be disseminated and accessed by an appropriate audience. The journal is archived, ensuring that it remains available as a public record that can be located and cited by other researchers.

Gratitude to those past editors, and to all those across the SLT programmes in Ireland, who contributed to the ‘elder-now-retired’, *Journal of Clinical Speech & Language Studies*!

A hearty Welcome – Céad míle fáilte – to *Advances in Communication and Swallowing*, its editorial staff, and all contributing to its establishment: Go n-éirí and t-adh libh.

Beir bua!

Margaret M. Leahy