

The Journal of Athletic Training: Volume 50!

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The *Journal of Athletic Training (JAT)* officially turned 50 with the January 2015 issue. Although the origins of *JAT* date to 1956, a volume number was not assigned to the publication for several years. I was not there for the beginning but recall receiving my issue of *Athletic Training* 4 times each year as a student in the 1970s. *Athletic Training* provided athletic trainers with a venue to share their knowledge and keep abreast of association news in the bygone days before the Internet. Many athletic trainers, including me, published their first papers in our journal. Although my effort didn't transform our profession, that first publication was a milestone in the professional socialization of a young clinician.

My interest in disseminating ideas continued with a few more papers, but *JAT* was to have a much greater effect on me and my career. In 1989, Editor-in-Chief Dr Ken Knight invited me to join the evolving editorial board at a time when the volume of submissions was beginning to demand a larger team effort. I have had the great fortune to serve under Dr Knight and his successors (and my good friends), Dr David Perrin and Dr Chris Ingersoll. I have now been a part of *JAT* for 25 of its 50 years and a good portion of my career. I have witnessed changes that were unimaginable when I submitted that first paper back in 1982.

The evolution of *JAT* mirrors the many changes in our profession and world over the past half century. The 50th-anniversary celebration is a time to recognize all of those who have served as our editor or editor-in-chief:

Art Dickinson
Jackie Copeland
D. Conrad Jarvis
Marvin Roberson
Clyde Stretch
Clint Thompson
Rod Compton
Ken Wolfert
Steve Yates
Kenneth L. Knight
David H. Perrin
Christopher D. Ingersoll

Our 2 most recent editors-in-chief (Dr Perrin [1996–2004] and Dr Ingersoll [2004–2012]) shared some memories and reflected on the accomplishments during their terms that strengthened *JAT*.

David H. Perrin, PhD, ATC, FNATA, FACSM

My primary goal as editor-in-chief was to build upon the extraordinary strides made by my predecessors in transforming *JAT* into a more scholarly journal. With the

support of a terrific managing editor, outstanding associate editors, a dedicated editorial board, and the National Athletic Trainers' Association Board of Directors, we accomplished this in several ways.

By the early 1990s, the number of athletic training scholars was growing and there was an increased focus on research. One of the more exciting developments in athletic training education was the emergence of doctoral programs tailored specifically for certified athletic trainers. Previously, athletic trainers interested in careers as scholars had to pursue doctoral education in disciplines related to athletic training, such as exercise physiology, biomechanics, motor learning, and curriculum and development, among others. These doctoral students naturally published their work in the journals related to these disciplines. The advent of doctoral programs directly related to our discipline required the transformation of the *JAT* into a more scholarly journal to serve as the outlet for the research produced by this new generation of athletic training faculty.

We enhanced the scholarly appearance of *JAT* by moving advertisements to the front and back of issues and began publishing case reports and media reviews in a new "From the *JAT*" section in the *NATA News*. We also published several thematic special issues that focused on topics such as prevention and treatment of anterior cruciate ligament injuries, injuries to the shoulder, concussion, ankle instability, and athletic training education.

Another priority was to enhance *JAT*'s prominence within the sports medicine community. We expanded editorial board membership to include representation from the broader health professions and medical communities and added several international members. We gained acceptance into PubMed Central, which also helped pave the way for acceptance into MEDLINE.

Several actions enabled us to enhance the sophistication of the process by which manuscripts were submitted, reviewed, and published. We established a permanent editorial office at the Hughston Clinic, and we went "live" with a fully online manuscript-submission and review process. In addition, we launched the annual manuscript reviewers' workshops, which have continued to gain in popularity.

The opportunity to contribute to the evolution of our scholarly journal was an honor and a privilege. My successors have continued to build upon the transformation of *JAT* into a more scholarly journal. As a result, today it is regarded as among the most important resources for information related to education and research in the prevention, evaluation, management, and rehabilitation of injuries to physically active people.

Christopher D. Ingersoll, PhD, AT, ATC, FNATA, FACSM, FASAHP

As I transitioned into the *JAT* editor-in-chief position in 2004, planning focused on continuing the evolution of *JAT* as a modern, relevant, high-quality scientific journal. Previous editors-in-chief had made considerable progress transforming the *JAT* from an association news publication to a scientific journal. However, the quality of *JAT* was not widely known. Our strategy to improve the visibility and reputation of *JAT* was to emphasize its quality and relevance to sports medicine.

Before 2004, *JAT* was largely a paper business. The *Journal* was available only in print form, and manuscript reviews were paper based. We adopted an online manuscript-submission and peer-review system in 2004. The review process was expedited, as we no longer had to wait for packages to be delivered through the mail. Published articles were now available electronically, and members could choose whether they wanted *JAT* in paper or electronic form.

The terms *athletic training* and *athletic trainer* had long created confusion in the clinical and scientific worlds. The role of the athletic trainer was confused with that of personal trainers and other trainers, so there was ambiguity about what we did and about the scientific foundations of our profession. In an attempt to clarify this confusion, we developed a taxonomy for *JAT* that outlined the scientific foundations of the profession and made it clear that we were health care professionals. The taxonomy sections were added to the *JAT* masthead (“Prevention and Risk Identification”; “Pathology, Physiology, and Biodynamics”; “Examination, Treatment, and Rehabilitation”; and “Administration, Professional Development, and Pedagogy”) and helped the uninformed to better understand our profession.

Several previous attempts had been made to include *JAT* in *Index Medicus* (MEDLINE). Inclusion in *Index Medicus* was important so that scientists and clinicians around the world would be able to find the articles published in *JAT*. This increased visibility and the prestige of being selected for indexing were considered priorities to improve the reputation of *JAT*. After much strategizing with the section editors and consultations with others inside and outside the profession, we submitted an application for indexing in MEDLINE to the Literature Selection Technical Review Committee of the National Library of Medicine, the group that makes recommendations for indexing. Placement of the section areas on the masthead, identifying section editors for those areas, and other organizational changes were made primarily to better convey our mission and to improve *JAT* for all authors and readers but also with the idea of better communicating the content of *JAT* to the committee. On March 5, 2007, I received a letter from the executive editor of MEDLINE stating that *JAT* had been accepted for indexing. Much celebration ensued.

Once *JAT* was included in MEDLINE, important quality indices could be measured. In 3 short years, *JAT* had an impact factor of 2.478 and was ranked in the top 10 sport science journals by Thomson-Reuters’ Web of Science.

Although quality indices for journals were (and continue to be) controversial, our attainment of an impact factor greater than 2 precipitated an increase in domestic and international manuscript submissions. We always wanted *JAT* to be the journal of choice for athletic training scholars’ best work, but that goal was difficult to achieve before MEDLINE indexing because the quality of our journal could not be characterized as it was for other indexed journals. As such, many athletic training scholars felt compelled to publish their best work in other journals to receive appropriate recognition. The quality indices available from indexing in MEDLINE now allowed our profession’s scholars to identify *JAT* as a top-tier journal.

Other changes to *JAT* were made to align with evolving standards for clinical journals. Among them were the requirements to register clinical trials, inclusion of DOIs, provision of key points with articles, standardization of study designs, and development of a policy for duplicate submissions. The increase in high-quality manuscript submissions prompted the change from quarterly to bimonthly publication in 2008.

We also felt it was important for *JAT* to play a role in developing the new scholars in the profession. In 2005, we initiated a *JAT* session at the National Athletic Trainers’ Association Annual Meeting & Clinical Symposia.

The *JAT* continues to evolve to meet the needs of the profession. For example, our modest quarterly journal moved to monthly publication in 2015. We must continue to leverage technology changes and manage demand to meet the clinical needs of our profession. We, like all of the health professions, will need to interface with technology in near-real time to provide optimized care to our patients in the not-so-distant future. “Living” systematic reviews contextualized within evidence maps, for example, may become a practitioner’s most important clinical tool. The *JAT* will need to continue to evolve to meet these needs. I, personally, can’t wait to see all of this unfold.

The great work of my predecessors set the stage for *JAT* to grow and meet new challenges. The volume of submissions and the growing global interest in *JAT* requires continuous attention. In the past 3 years, the editorial office relocated to Saint Louis University and additional editorial staff was hired to better support and serve our authors and readers. In 2015, *JAT* went green and moved to an electronic-only format. Through the timely dissemination of research and policy, *JAT* will continue to be a window through which the world learns about athletic training.

Thank you, Dr Perrin and Dr Ingersoll, for sharing your stories, and thank you to all who have served on the editorial team. Thanks as well to all who have ever published in, reviewed for, or helped produce *JAT*. The growth and advancement of the athletic training profession over the past 50 years is paralleled by the evolution of our journal. Although it is impossible to predict what the 100th anniversary will bring, there is little doubt that *JAT* will continue to be the source of research and policy that defines athletic training practice and serves the needs of athletes and those who care for them around the world.