

An anniversary and you can help

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Anniversaries produce feelings, thoughts, and memories of significant experiences. Some anniversaries come with unsettling feelings. Others are more pleasant. But I think all anniversaries are a time to stop and reflect, and maybe learn something. You can help me with this one.

As I write this, it marks my first year as editor of the *Journal of the Medical Library Association (JMLA)*. I need first to express the great appreciation I have for the help I have received this past year. I start with our reviewers, in whose hands most *JMLA* content rests. They work hard, under time stress, for little or no acknowledgment. Those who helped in the last four issues are listed in the box. Thank you, my friends!

MLA headquarters has been patient and supportive as I learned the publishing ropes and all that goes on to make the *JMLA* happen. Thanks Elizabeth Lund and Susan C. T. Talmage. Couldn't do this without your support.

Now, I stop and reflect, and maybe learn something. You can help me.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

In the past year, we have made some changes in the *JMLA*.

- Highlight the abstract and make titles shorter: We believe readers taste the title and take a bite of the abstract, and that is how they decide whether to enter the full article.
- Add more space within the main texts: This improves reading ease.
- Adhere more strictly to introduction, methods, results, and discussion (IMRAD) format: It has been the *JMLA* format for several years. It is standard for many journals and produces predictable and comfortable articles.
- Use less rigid formal tone: For example, first person point-of-view can be used for methods and elsewhere where it makes sense or helps understanding.
- Add photographs of the primary author: This personalizes the paper and increases collegiality.

- Begin "Of Interest" series: These provide brief background on specialized topics that may not be completely familiar to many readers. Very popular already.

- Add more case studies: Sharing our experiences is fun, instructional, and helps us try new things.

- Shorten some articles: As all editors do, we edit out unnecessary words. This makes articles crisper with less clutter, and more interesting to read.

Generally, authors accept this. Many say editing has improved their article. One or two do not like it.

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Have you noticed any of these changes? Do you like them? Send me your comments. As the editor of the *JMLA*, I work for three groups: (1) MLA, my

professional society; (2) the researchers who produce the science-based knowledge necessary for the advancement of our profession; and (3) the members, who we hope will read and support the publication. The goal is that all MLA members will find *JMLA* articles that offer information useful for their professional work.

Tell me what you think. Send comments to jmlaeditorbox@gmail.com.

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