All's well that ends well for *JAMIA* editors

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ABSTRACT

Dr Randolph A Miller begins a self-imposed *JAMIA* retirement on January 1, 2011 after serving as Editor-in-Chief for eight and a half years. He lauds the selection of Lucia Ohno-Machado as an energetic, innovative, and highly qualified successor.

I consider it an honor and a privilege to have served as Editor-in-Chief for the *Journal of the American Medical Informatics Association* from July 2002 through December 2010. I was fortunate to have learned the trade over the previous decade while serving as an Associate Editor under our outstanding founding Editor-in-Chief, Dr William Stead. From him, I gained appreciation of the attention to detail, respect for individuals, teamwork, organizational skills, anticipation, and dedication to excellence that journal management requires. It is a tribute to Dr Stead's visionary leadership that the founding *JAMIA* Editor and all founding Associate Editors have subsequently been elected to membership in the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences.

Since 1993, I have watched AMIA, *JAMIA*, and our field mature in much the same way as my three daughters, who concurrently progressed from elementary school through college and professional/graduate schools. From its foundation in 1993 through June 2002, *JAMIA* peer reviewed approximately 1200 manuscripts. In the intervening 8 years, *JAMIA* received and processed an additional 2500 manuscripts, with an ongoing annual increase of 10–15% in the number of submissions. *JAMIA* issued 650 disposition notes and published 114 manuscripts (at any revision number) last year. The quality of submissions has steadily increased, and the overall acceptance rate has correspondingly decreased over the past decade from 50% to 24% (ie, only 24% of initial submissions were ever accepted for publication, after any number of subsequent revisions). Our ISI impact factor has consistently been at the top for journals in our field.

The journal has grown to now provide reports of methods and tools used routinely in biomedical research, industry, and clinical practice. The maturing of the journal has paralleled the maturing of our field. In the past decade, the US government has created the Office of the National Coordinator within the Executive Branch, and Congress has passed major legislative actions promoting informatics research and adoption in clinical practice. From its inception, *JAMIA* has served as a key scholarly archive in our field. In recent history, the current and past Presidents of the United States in their State of the Union addresses have cited the importance of our field to national strategic initiatives. Over the past two decades, clinical informatics activities have often been more impressive outside of the United States than internally. Research funding for our field by the National Institutes of Health, the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, private foundations, and governmental agencies in North America, Europe, and Asia has expanded substantially.

While some may rightfully view current times as the 'golden era' of informatics, it is important to remember what Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra said in *Don Quixote* in 1605: "the proof of the pudding is in the eating." The field cannot afford to stand still as present-day implementation efforts install what are essentially the first widely usable versions of clinical and research informatics software tools on a widespread basis. Only with substantial future research and innovation will we reach truly functional versions that will provide real 'meaningful utilization' from the clinician-users' and researchers' viewpoints. Having climbed half the mountain, the field cannot afford to rest on its laurels.

I owe a debt of gratitude to our *JAMIA* Editorial Assistants, Alexis Broussard (2005–2010) and Elizabeth Madsen (2002–2005), without whose substantial professional efforts the Journal could not have been published in a timely and effective manner. I gratefully acknowledge the support and sacrifice of my wife and family for the many times I was not free on various nights and weekends while immersed in *JAMIA* work. The support and leadership of the AMIA Office, the AMIA Publications Committee, our publishers — Hanley and Belfus, Elsevier, and BMJ Group — and the AMIA Board of Directors have been critically important to *JAMIA*. I would especially like to thank *JAMIA* authors, Editorial Board members, Student Editorial Board members, and outside reviewers, for they have been key determinants of the quality and importance of *JAMIA* content over its history. Major critical decisions regarding *JAMIA* manuscripts have been made by Kevin Johnson — who as *JAMIA* Assistant Editor has skillfully developed and overseen the activities of our Student Editorial Board — and by the outstanding *JAMIA* Associate Editors who devote substantial time and energy on an almost daily basis. The current Associate Editor group includes Patti Brennan, Betsy Humphreys, Lucila Ohno-Machado, Enrico Coiera, Chuck Friedman, and Prakash Nadkarni. Previous Associate Editors who served during the 2002–present era include Dan Masys, George Hripcsak, and Gil Kuperman.

The greatest hope of a retiring Editor is that the journal will thrive under its new leadership. The AMIA Board commissioned a Task Force led by former AMIA President Reed M Gardner to identify a small number of candidates qualified to become *JAMIA* Editor in January 2011, so that the Board could select one. The Task Force and the AMIA Board

have done an outstanding job in identifying Lucila Ohno-Machado, MD, PhD, as our next Editor-in-Chief. Lucila is well-versed in clinical, translational, and bioinformatics, and has been one of *JAMIA*'s most capable Associate Editors. She has new and exciting ideas for how to improve the Journal. I have been able to sleep well over the past six months knowing that Dr Ohno-Machado is more than capable of leading *JAMIA* to new heights.

I close with some advice for our next Editor-in-Chief and with great confidence in the future success of *JAMIA*. William Shakespeare, one of the greatest authors of all time, had many insights still relevant to informatics. He stated in 1602—03, in *All's Well That Ends Well*, Act I, Scene 1 (with a few paraphrases that I have added):

[With regard to Dr Ohno-Machado's becoming *JAMIA* Editor]

Be thou blest, Lucila, and succeed thy predecessors

In manners as in style! Thy skill and virtue

Contend for empire in thee, and thy goodness

Share with thy readers!

[With regard to future Editorial Office handling of *JAMIA* submissions]

Love all, trust a few,

Do wrong to none. Be able for thine enemy

Rather in power than use, and keep thy friends

Under thy own life's key. Be check'd for silence,

But never tax'd for speech.

[With regard to good fortune befalling *JAMIA*]

What heaven more will,

That thee may furnish,

and our prayers pluck down,

Fall on thy head!