

## EDITORIAL

### Becoming a new editorial committee member

As a new member of the Editorial Board of the *Japan Journal of Nursing Science (JJNS)*, I have a renewed sense of responsibility as a nurse scientist in two worlds, in Japan and in the United States. I am committed to transforming the Journal and moving it into the next phase of its development under the leadership of the Editor-in-Chief and other fellow Board members. At the same time, I cannot help feeling a sense of awe at having been assigned this role in such an interesting time for nursing science and for nurses globally.

From this side of the world, over the Pacific Ocean from Japan, the world does not look so good. We may have lost the beautiful New Orleans, the home of American jazz, forever. The Iraq war seems to deteriorate into endless chaos. Race and class divide America deeply. There have also been several recent natural disasters in Japan, my homeland. While the world seems unpredictable and unstable, at least two phenomena are universal and consistent in relation to nursing research. People in wealthy societies are getting older on average, and these societies face massive immigration from poor countries. Both phenomena are major public health threats to many wealthy societies and both call for nursing interventions.

Chronic diseases (e.g. cardiovascular disease, diabetes and depression) and the health conditions leading to them, for example sedentary lifestyles, obesity, and isolation, are common denominators for rich nations, whereas infectious diseases persist and are rampant in poor societies. Healthy reproductive-age adults in wealthy societies view childbirth as a burden, thus resulting in lower reproductive rates. At the same time, new immigrants and their children in these wealthy societies face health disparities relative to the non-migrant population. We recognize that nanotechnology and advancement in the field of genome research does little to address these issues.

Changing economies and ever-increasing health-care costs hinging upon these public health threats have forced wealthy societies to re-examine the social structure of access to and distribution of health-care. The cost-effectiveness of nursing services has been reported on, and studies related to nursing care have received

increasingly more attention from disciplines outside nursing. Leading nursing research journals such as the *JJNS* have a responsibility to push this ‘tipping point’, which may change the landscape of health care and health science.

In such an interesting time, the duties of a leading nursing research journal such as *JJNS* include a steadfast stewardship of disseminating the research findings of nurse researchers. Incorporation of the peer review process for all authors regardless of membership has an important role in successfully bringing Japanese nursing research to the international arena. Peer review (known as refereeing in some academic fields) involves critically evaluating a colleague’s work. It is a scholarly process used in the publication of manuscripts, and editorial staff use peer review to select and screen submissions. The process also assists authors in meeting the standards of their discipline. Publications that have not undergone peer review are liable to be regarded with suspicion by scholars and professionals in many fields. Although the principles of peer review have been criticized, and implementing a fair and meaningful process is not easy, it is the only available method to ensure that science remains scientific. The peer review process also ensures another condition; that is, only the quality of a paper should determine its eligibility (insofar as the topic is relevant to the scope of the discipline).

Providing members with opportunities to publish in an English-language journal is an important goal. However, this should not be the only goal for a journal of the magnitude of the *JJNS*. Instead of protecting the rights of members to publish by using restricted eligibility criteria, the journal may wish to publish only the highest quality studies. It is worthwhile for members of the Japan Academy of Nursing Science (JANS) invest resources nurturing the development of a leading international nursing research journal. At the same time, the Journal and the Editorial Board must take leadership in providing tailored (i.e. convenient and efficient) opportunities and resources to its members for promoting rigorous research and authorship. Holding workshops for writing in English, providing opportunities for networking with English-speaking colleagues, and provid-

ing tutorial services are important approaches for achieving this goal. With a membership of more than 4500 nurse scientists in Japan and abroad, I believe that the JANS has a unique opportunity and, certainly, a responsibility to lead nursing research globally.

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