

Editorial

From the Desk of the Editor-in-Chief

 Shalini Govil^{1,2}

¹Senior Advisor and Quality Controller, Columbia Asia Radiology Group, Bengaluru, Karnataka, India

²Adjunct Associate Professor of Radiology, Christian Medical College, Vellore, Tamil Nadu, India

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Dr. Shalini Govil

INAUGURARE

... to unveil ... to usher in ...

“For the beginning is thought to be more than half of the whole, and many of the questions we ask are cleared up by it. We must presumably first sketch it roughly, and then later fill in the details... for any one can add what is lacking.”

Aristotle—on Beginnings: circa 335–323 B.C.¹

For the *Journal of Gastrointestinal and Abdominal Imaging ISGAR* (if we are to believe Aristotle), this inaugural issue is not just a beginning... it is more than half of the whole. Many of the questions we ask about this journal will be answered simply by virtue of a beginning... sketched roughly now, later to be filled-in with details... because (apparently) “anyone can add what is lacking...”

So, like sweet Pollyanna, we shall merrily go forth to sketch this beginning with a light hand, confident that the worldwide abdominal imaging community will, in the fullness of time, color in the rich details. At the cusp of any change, it is prudent to view, Janus-like, the future and the past. Beginnings are, after all, a time for retrospection and resolution... for bombast and simplicity... for questioning, “Can we... should we...?” even as we pull up anchor and set sail shouting “Why ever not?!”

As scientists, we have a rich heritage of scientific writing, spanning 350 years. In 1665 the “The Royal Society of London for Improving Natural Knowledge” published the first edition of its “Philosophical Transactions,” considered to be the first scientific periodical (→ Fig. 1). It was overseen by the Society’s Secretary, Henry Oldenburg, possibly the first ever Editor-in-Chief, who managed the correspondence.² This first edition and, unbelievably, every single issue thereafter, is held in the Royal Society of London Academy Library and Archives. A beautiful sepia-toned cover page firmly sets out its intent as “...giving some accompt (archaic English for “account”) of the present Undertakings, Studies, and Labors of the Ingenious

in many considerable parts of the world...” This first journal had a very simple aim: to update its readers of inspired and ground-breaking research from all over the world... and so was born, without any further ado, pomp, or circumstance, the practice of publishing what is interesting, true, and worthy, as determined by a group of scientific peers.

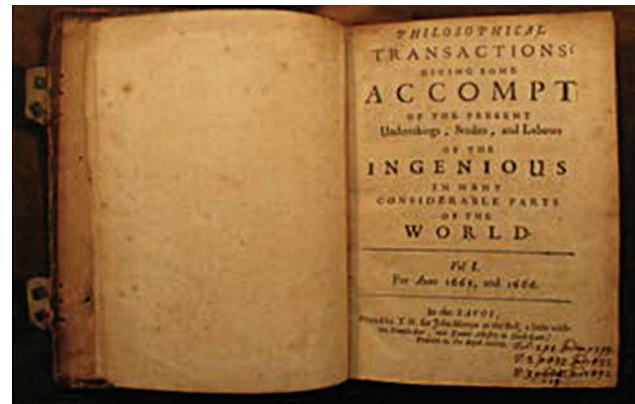


Fig. 1 Volume 1 (1665) of the Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London, Academy Library and Archives, QHI.R861.

Nearly two centuries later, in 1843 and across the pond, The New England Quarterly Journal of Medicine and Surgery was published under the editorship of Charles E. Ware and Samuel Parkman in Boston. It was here that the world learned of “The Contagiousness of Puerperal Fever,” from Oliver Wendell Holmes. In 1846, The Boston Medical and Surgical Journal ran a short communication from John C. Warren entitled “Inhalation of Ethereal Vapor for the Prevention of Pain in Surgical Operations.”³ Infectious disease and surgical anesthesia, the cornerstones of modern medicine, reached the world through the judicious publication of these discoveries.

But let us not be lulled by this sepia-tinted and rosy retrospection... Editors and Reviewers both then, and now, are damned

Address for correspondence

Shalini Govil, DMRD, DNB, FRCR, Apt 1A, Triad Heritage, 15, Llyods Road, Cooke Town, Bengaluru 560005, Karnataka, India
(e-mail: shalagovil@gmail.com).

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if they do and damned if they don't. In 1798, Edward Jenner self-published his work on small pox entitled, "An Inquiry into the Causes and Effects of the Variolae Vaccinae." There is a popular notion that his work was rejected a year earlier by a hapless British Royal Society and that his self-publication was the first "open access" article in Immunology! However, there is apparently no formal record of his submission and that it is more likely that this was an informal "desk reject" advising him not to publish before collecting robust evidence... sensible and sound editorial advice that he followed to his great advantage. Or is that my new bias as an Editor-in-Chief?

Like "Philosophical Transactions" back in 1665, JGAR aims to publish the "Undertakings, Studies, and Labours of the Ingenious in many considerable parts of the world." From the lofty heights of the randomized, controlled double-blinded study to the lowly case report, if it is ingenious and of interest, we promise to "give it some accompt" and send it out to every corner of the world.

This first issue "accompts" ingenious and original research that questions the one-size-fits-all scan timing recommended for CT enterography that does not take into account differences in gut transit in different populations. It also includes a scholarly review of abdominal wall "lumps and bumps" of differing etiologies. And, because patients do not know they are rare when they walk into Radiology, you will also find in JGAR the "Ripley's Believe it or Not" of abdominal pathologies: case reports of the rare and bizarre that will someday assist the wretched soul staring at a gastric bezoar, its tresses plaited and primped after a visit to the hairdresser, slithering, and telescoping its way down the small bowel. "*Rapunzel, Rapunzel, let down your hair, so that I may climb*

thy golden stair." Finally, recognizing the need for articulating the methods of detection and diagnosis, JGAR offers a unique "Case-in-Discussion" section that teaches the art of perception, observation, analysis, and inference with detailed and exquisite line diagrams, annotations, and fanciful metaphors. In issues to come, we will journey into the future with clinical research on Artificial Intelligence and Augmented Reality, Computer-aided 3D Printing, Enterprise Imaging and the Virtual Radiology Marketplace.

But as we journey at the speed of light into a galaxy far, far away, Aristotle continues to beckon, whispering his wise counsel:

"... (do) not look for precision in all things alike...our main task (must) not be subordinated to minor questions."

"...nor demand the cause in all matters alike; it is enough in some cases that the fact be well established, as in the case of the first principles"

"...see some (first principles) by induction, some by perception, some by a certain habituation..."

"...try to investigate in the natural way...take pains to state them definitely, since they have a great influence on what follows"

Let us remain Janus-like, hurtling into the future on the whispered counsel of the past.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I give you JGAR... as the beauty of her cover softly colors in the details of this rough sketch of a beginning, I leave you with a small poem I wrote for the occasion, as all gentle bards must do...

If: a Parody

...with apologies to Rudyard Kipling

If we can gather data without compromise,
Test hypothesis without concern for prize,
If we can report observations truthfully, concisely and elegantly,
And reveal flaws and biases likewise.
If we can study for the sake of Study and Truth and the well-being of our patients,
If Discovery can be our incentive
And not the hollow hurrahs of our fellow man!

If we can research and not make research our master,
If we can publish—and not make publishing our aim;
If we can face Acceptance and Rejection
And treat those two messengers just the same;
If we can bear to read our own article,
Twisted by others to mislead the innocents,
Or watch our Society or our Journal be splintered
Yet continue our work without complaint...

If we can take our decades of work and learning,
And risk it on a good cause...
And lose, and start again at the beginning,
And never speak about what we lost.
If we can force the Liver, Gut and Kidneys
To reveal what they jealously hide,
And cling to our mouse with nothing left
But the will to survive.

If we can speak at annual conferences,
Chat with doyens and the quiet ones,
If neither friends nor rivals can hurt us,
If every member matters but no one too much,
If we can fill the hour
With sixty minutes of Abdomen, Pelvis and Perineum...
Ours is the World and everything that's in it,
And—what is more—this will be our JGAR everyone!

References

- 1 Marta MM. A brief history of the evolution of the medical research article. *Clujul Med* 2015;88(4):567–570

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- 3 Aristotle *Metaphysics*. Book I, 1098a–b; §7 as translated by W. D. Ross