

Time, Space, the Present, and the Future

It hardly seems possible that the calendar is telling us it is 2002 when it seems we barely have gotten over our concerns about Y2K. The events of September 11, 2001, also have contributed to this helpless feeling that time marches ahead, insensitive to our needs to pause, reflect, and regroup. Alas, we do not have the luxury of ignoring the fact that the future is upon us, and, ready or not, we need to do more than just cope—we need to take charge and move forward purposefully.

Our plans for the future will be made with cognizance of the September 11 tragedies. Our cover choice this year implicitly offers our thoughts, prayers, and hopes for our country, for those we have lost, and for those who will work to achieve a lasting peace in the world—a peace that will have to include acceptance of a diversity of beliefs and cultures. Every aspect of life in the United States these days seems pledged to those goals, and we are a part of it.

As we acknowledge these current events, the *Oncology Nursing Forum (ONF)* Editorial Board has been working to ensure that the journal will keep pace with technology and new information-sharing strategies in the coming years and stay positioned to meet the challenges we will face. As a first step, we will begin publishing online-exclusive *ONF* articles. For each issue of *ONF*, selected articles will be published online only on the Oncology Nursing Society (ONS) Web site, ONS Online (www.ons.org). To access these articles, go to the *ONF* area of ONS Online at www.ons.org/xp6/ONS/Library.xml/ONS_Publications.xml/ONF.xml. The online-exclusive articles have been peer reviewed and have met the *ONF* criteria for publication. An abstract and key points for each of these articles will appear in the print version of the journal to pique your interest and direct you to ONS Online for the full text of the article.

I collaborate with the authors to decide which articles to publish online only. Two or

three online-exclusive articles will be published with each issue. The print version will continue to be as full as you have been used to seeing it. Every online-exclusive article will be indexed just as every other *ONF* article is indexed, and access to the online-exclusive articles will not be restricted.

We decided to begin publishing online-exclusive articles for several reasons. The main benefit of this approach is timeliness. *ONF* is a popular and respected journal, which often leaves us with many articles competing for a limited amount of space in the print edition. Presently, an article can be published online much sooner than would be possible in print form. Thus, authors receive the advantage of having their articles published relatively quickly without the standard waiting period associated with print articles. Another reason is that online publishing is not restricted by space considerations to nearly the extent that a print article might be. This format can accommodate very long articles without some of the print costs and other concerns related to the print version.

In addition, ONS members are finding new and creative ways to use the Internet and computer technology to improve patient care. Description of these activities, which sometimes includes an interactive component, is not presented as effectively in a print format. In an online format, we have the potential to make that content come alive. We also hope that online publication may, in the future, facilitate having a discussion forum with the author, allow readers to automatically “send” the article to a colleague who might be interested, or broaden the scope of the type of content that we publish. I think we only are beginning to realize the potential.

What particularly appeals to me about the online-exclusive articles is that they will have to meet the same high-quality standards as traditional *ONF* articles. At a time when so

much information is available on the Internet that may or may not be trustworthy, it will be reassuring to know that at least the information we are responsible for has passed the test of peer review. In the future, we also plan to provide continuing-education credit for some of these articles.

None of this would be possible without the efforts of ONS Online Editor Elizabeth G. Gomez, RN, MSN, AOCN®, and her editorial board, who have provided ONS with an award-winning platform from which to launch these new ventures. We are collaborating with them as we move forward.

In addition to online-exclusive articles, this issue of *ONF* includes for the first time digital object identifiers (DOIs) with all of the articles and features that eventually will appear online. DOIs provide an alternate way of finding information on the Internet that does not change over time. Basically, DOIs always stay the same and always link to their corresponding content, unlike traditional Web addresses that commonly are changed and subsequently lead to “dead” or otherwise inadequate links. When added to “http://dx.doi.org/,” a DOI can be used to quickly and easily locate a print piece. For example, adding this editorial’s DOI (10.1188/02.ONF.13) to http://dx.doi.org/ results in http://dx.doi.org/10.1188/02.ONF.13, which can be used like any other Web address to retrieve the editorial on the Internet.

ONF is not the first nursing or medical journal to include online-exclusive articles and DOIs, but we are proud to be among the first. As always, we value your feedback regarding all matters related to *ONF*. Please consider providing us with your thoughts and opinions about these latest changes. Feel free to e-mail me at rose_mary@earthlink.net. _____

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