FROM THE EDITOR

A New Year’s Opportunities and Updates
Debra Lyon, RN, PhD, FNP-BC, FAAN

A new year brings with it a chance to feel like there is a beginning, an opportunity for reflection and a time for pursuing best practices.

Welcome to a new year! 2024. For those of us born sometime in the mid–former century, it may seem like time is moving faster these days. For others, during the postpandemic years, with ongoing COVID-19 outbreaks and heightened national and international political turmoil, the new year may seem like a continuation of the same, without an obvious aspect of renewal. In any case, a new year brings with it a chance to feel like there is a beginning, an opportunity for reflection and a time for pursuing best practices. As the editor of the Oncology Nursing Forum (ONF), I would like to use this time to highlight several items of interest for 2024 as we continue to serve our oncology nursing readership that has expanded over the years to include interprofessional scientists and practitioners in addition to oncology nursing scientists and clinicians.

As we continue to focus on publishing the best oncology nursing research, a few areas warrant focus for the new year so that we can continue the role of ONF as a premier oncology nursing journal. First, ONF needs to continue to receive multiple submissions to continue our dissemination of the best oncology nursing research. We need authors, both senior and junior, to consider submitting to ONF first. Our evaluation data collected from authors indicates that our authors feel supported and satisfied with the editorial process, from submission, to revision, to copy editing, and, finally, to publication. Our time to publication is relatively short, and we communicate with authors throughout the review process. As the editor, I will review abstracts and give authors a quick heads-up about “fit” for manuscripts in development or ready for submission so that they can have an appraisal prior to going through the online submission process.

Next, the publication process at ONF depends on a strong peer review system: We need to nurture the development of new reviewers and enhance the processes for our experienced reviewers to meet the demands of the publication enterprise. Peer review is a cornerstone of publishing and “giving voice” to the research that supports the further development of science. At ONF, we need to continue to consider the pathway that is necessary for the journal to remain strong by nurturing our reviewers and soliciting ONF Editorial Board members with diverse skills, knowledge, and backgrounds. We encourage authors, once published, to apply to be a reviewer for ONF. For the continuation and innovation of oncology nursing science, we encourage Oncology Nursing Society members who have at least beginning publishing experience to consider reviewing for ONF at least once or twice a year. Since the pandemic, and with the burgeoning number of new healthcare journals, it is increasingly difficult to match reviewers and submissions. This is an international issue in journal publication; the balance between demand (the number of manuscripts submitted) and supply (the number of reviewers) has been disrupted (El-Guebaly

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et al., 2023). In addition, there is some thought that the labor market of the academic and healthcare workforce has been fundamentally altered by the pandemic (Flaherty, 2022), with a lower willingness of individuals to volunteer for additional work, including peer review. At ONF, with a large constituency of practicing nurses in our reviewer pool, the effects of the pandemic on staffing and institutional stressors may further compound our pool of available reviewers.

As we move to 2024, we are expanding our focus and outreach to include a themed issue: The focus will be compelling areas of oncology nursing symptom science. We encourage authors to submit their manuscripts for this issue by January 31 (https://bit.ly/4a4Mgw4). We are also considering a focus on cancer health disparities for a themed issue in 2025. For these themed issues to be successful, we will need authors to submit their focused manuscripts and reviewers who are content experts so that we can publish outstanding special editions.

I want to say a hearty “thank you” to ONF Editorial Board members Randy A. Jones, PhD, RN, FAAN, and Timiya S. Nolan, PhD, APRN-CNP, ANP-BC, who completed their term in December. Their contributions during the past three years have been notable, particularly their input and vision for the updated mission statement for ONF. Please welcome Sadeeka Al-Majid, PhD, RN, FAAN, and Virginia LeBaron, PhD, APRN, FAANP, FAAN, who will begin their role on the ONF Editorial Board in 2024.

To our readers, let us work together for a great 2024!

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REFERENCES