FROM THE EDITORS' DESK

Seeing Wisely

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There is no replacement in medicine for seeing with your own eyes. Years after leaving the anatomy lab, we still may recall the course of the vagus nerve by visualizing our medical school cadaver. Likewise, the silvery, scaling plaques of psoriasis or the stigmata of liver disease are never quite as memorable as when first seen at the bedside. Indeed, the cognitive theory of multimedia learning suggests something that medical educators have known for decades: learners process verbal and pictorial content via different pathways, and may benefit from a combination of text and visual-based information.^{1,2}

However, simply seeing is not enough. When teaching on bedside rounds, we do not merely point out a finding; we also describe the why and how of what we see. Sir William Osler once commented that “the value of experience is not in seeing much, but in seeing wisely,”³ and we at JGIM agree. The spirit of “seeing wisely” is what led to the development of JGIM’s Clinical Images section 6 years ago, and what continues to guide our work today. Although Osler would have preferred a bedside visit with the patient, we attempt to bring the patient to the reader. We seek to place interesting and important medical images in the proper clinical context, answering the question not only of “what” but also of “why” and “how.” Each image provides specific learning points, with emphasis on cases that are relevant to the generalist readership of our journal.

The concept of the illness script has become ubiquitous in medicine,⁴ with increasing attention paid to how clinicians encode clinical patterns of disease. Illness scripts commonly include information related to epidemiology, duration of symptoms, and clinical presentation. We believe that clinical images may further enhance these scripts and ultimately aid in

effective diagnosis. To this end, one of our goals for the Clinical Images section is to help provide our readers with a growing library of illness scripts—building new scripts for previously unfamiliar conditions, and adding onto those scripts that already exist.

Since 2014, the number of monthly submissions to the JGIM Clinical Images section has nearly doubled, with manuscripts coming from all over the world. By necessity, we have become increasingly selective in what is accepted for publication in our print journal. However, the advent of JGIM web (www.jgim.org) has created an additional platform for publication of high-quality clinical images. The images published on JGIM web are reformatted to include the presentation of a clinical unknown and a multiple-choice question. Future generations of physicians will be comfortable in image-rich computer-based environments, and medical journals are adapting. The JGIM web images represent our first foray into the interactive multimedia environment which seems to be the future of medical education.⁵

Whether in print or online, we believe that the educational role of visual media will only increase in the coming years. This current issue features a collection of clinical images that reflect our mission to help our readers see wisely.

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