



# Third decade of the Journal of Nuclear Cardiology: reflections of an author, reviewer, and editor

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My tenure with the Journal of Nuclear Cardiology is marked by a transformation in my thinking on what the Journal should represent. Guided by the Editor's vision, I came to understand that the Journal is not only the voice of Nuclear Cardiology, but also the home of those interested in our field who desire to contribute to our understanding of how to improve it. Rather than pursuing to procure the perfect manuscript with impeccable science and large, prospective patient populations, which are rare, the goal was to be inclusive of individuals motivated to promote a stepwise refinement of our field. In this sense, the journey is more important than the destination. In this sense, our field has grown in terms of contributors, particularly by scientists from many fields. In this sense, we should pat ourselves on the back and tell ourselves, "Job well done."

JNC has not taken full advantage of the opportunities offered by the internet to educate our readers. Over the next decade, the Journal needs to take a giant step not just into the internet, but into the metaverse to remain vital and continue to serve and educate the nuclear cardiology community. In the future, the content for original research, reviews, and case reports must be interactive, iterative, clinically meaningful, and socially interactive. Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok are a start, but we need to enter the metaverse to emulate the workstation environment, have interactive tables and figures, and do interactive educational sessions with expert presentations and interaction with our "readers." An Iskandrian avatar is in our future! This JNC metaverse cannot exist with the tools provided in our current

format and the website needs to be re-engineered drastically and improved to allow these functions to be available.

I appreciated the collegial atmosphere promoted by you, Ami, for our discussions and interactions among the Editorial team members and even more importantly between the manuscript authors and reviewers. These interactions have aimed to provide critical feedback in a respectful manner, which helps to improve the quality of submissions and publications in the Journal.

Nuclear cardiology has been the most important part of my academic and practical spheres. The JNC has been a great vehicle for this activity and has certainly been the main vehicle for the rigorous transmission of knowledge and information regarding the field of nuclear cardiology on an international basis. My involvement with the JNC began on January 1, 1994, when our team of researchers published an article in the first issue of the journal. We were immensely proud of this because it was the first article published by a European country. Beginning with the first issue, the JNC has for years, published original, focused, high-quality scientific papers on nuclear cardiology, ranging from clinical investigation to physics and methodology, from single-photon emission computed tomography to positron emission tomography and hybrid imaging. I can conclude that the JNC family has been and will be an important part of my professional life and beyond.

The Journal of Nuclear Cardiology has played important roles in the introduction of recent technology, such as data analysis, suitable instruments, and radiopharmaceuticals. Such activities have provided us with suitable and efficient management for cardiac patients. While there seems to be some regional differences in technical and clinical applications, the international discussions and collaborations will help progress in this field. Some Asian activities have also been well recognized, such as the Japanese Guideline for diagnosis of cardiac sarcoidosis and Takayasu's arteritis. We are glad

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to recognize nice discussions on how to prepare patients before FDG administration to suppress physiological uptake in the myocardium for not only cardiac sarcoidosis but also for various cardiovascular inflammations. Furthermore, I-123-labeled compounds are clinically available in Japan. There are several clinical papers indicating how to use BMIPP for identifying ischemic history. In addition, MIBG has been internationally used for assessing severity of heart failure. These clinical experiences may help worldwide applications in future.

Authors want their manuscripts to be fairly evaluated during the peer review process. High-quality peer review depends on the availability of expert reviewers who are willing to spend the time required to provide objective, constructive feedback. This can be challenging when the manuscript is on newer topics such as molecular imaging and artificial intelligence, which like any emerging science, often have some limitations, but are important to the growth of nuclear cardiology. Many experts in nuclear cardiology are not as familiar with those newer areas of investigation as they are, for instance, with myocardial perfusion imaging. Potential reviewers with expertise in those areas, on the other hand, may not be as familiar with nuclear cardiology or appreciate the importance of supporting and promoting new science within the nuclear cardiology community. This can create a dilemma for the editor – how to consider fair criticism of the data while ascertaining that emerging topics have a home to get published. In addition, as much as we all like to see groundbreaking science published in the Journal, JNC has a key role in publishing sound nuclear cardiology-related papers, even when they have limitations and provide incremental advances. Whether groundbreaking or incremental, it is critical that a paper's claims and conclusions are supported by the data in the manuscript, and when there are limitations, they are specifically acknowledged in a prominent place and preferably in the abstract. By adhering to these principles, JNC can help the readers reach a balanced view of any manuscript, while serving as a medium to support nuclear cardiology research.

The most remarkable things about Dr. Iskandrian's tenure as Editor-in-Chief is that the Journal of Nuclear Cardiology has not only had a near doubling of the number of submissions and published manuscripts but that it also has had a more than doubling of the Impact Factor and sharp rises in other metrics of publication quality. The advice I would give to the new editorial team—emulate those features that contributed to this success. Some of these include as follows: (1) An emphasis on timely and fair reviews, starting at the top where the EIC leads by example. (2) Remember that the

key role of the Journal is to promote excellent science in the field of nuclear cardiology, and the audience is global. (3) Remember that JNC is not only a scholarly journal but that it is also the organ of the American Society of Nuclear Cardiology, and the Journal needs to serve the members of ASNC. The field evolves, issues arise, the needs of the membership change with time, and the editorial team needs to be flexible, adaptable, and sensitive to what is salient.

The toughest task of being a journal editor is not determining whether to accept or reject manuscripts, but to improve the work to the benefit of the authors and readers. It is particularly hard when a paper comes slightly short of being suitable for publication due to ineffective messaging or packaging. However, paper may have some bright spots to feature or good substance to build on. Sometimes we refer to such as paper a gem covered with dirt or music notes lost in the noise. JNC separates itself from any other journal by investing in its authors. Instead of simply rejecting the paper, as most journals would do, we collaborate with the authors to clean the dirt and filter the noise, elevating the messaging and packaging such that the paper adds to our nuclear cardiology literature. This must be the most rewarding aspect of a JNC editor.

The January 2023 issue of JNC will mark the completion of the 10-year term of the outgoing editorial team of the journal. I am incredibly grateful to Ami Iskandrian, ASNC, and its Scientific Publishing Committee for giving me the opportunity to serve as part of the Journal's editorial team during the last 5 years. Ami's vision to continue to expand the reach, impact, and timely dissemination of advances in our field to keep investigators and clinicians at the forefront of nuclear cardiology and its application to clinical practice was what attracted me when he called to invite me to be a part of the team. We strove to complement original research articles with editorials, state-of-the-art reviews, point of view, and controversies that in aggregate would provide critical, scientifically grounded viewpoints, and discussion on topics relevant to imaging research and the practice of imaging. Through all this time, this editorial team tried to stay true to these guiding principles.

For me, it has been a great honor and pleasure to serve under the visionary, caring, and inspirational leadership of Ami Iskandrian. He embodies the qualities of what an EIC should be: vision, passion, experience, attention to details, unmatched 24/7 dedication to the journal, and much more. He has been an amazing role model to all of us in the editorial team, always leading by example, with his characteristic gentle but firm touch. During my 5-year tenure, there have been regular e-mail and phone conversations to discuss articles, assigned editorials, commission of invited content, and broader

policy issues covered. These countless e-mail and phone conversations, with lively discussion, motivated by a shared commitment to “getting it right,” have been a high point of my tenure at the Journal. I have learned much from Ami and other members of the editorial team, and I have been privileged to benefit from their intellect, honesty, innovative ideas, and uncommon, good sense. Thanks to the outstanding leadership of Ami Iskandrian and the collective challenging work of a large team of individuals, JNC is currently considered one of the top journals in the science and practice of nuclear cardiology, with a global reach.

I also wish to give special thanks to all our reviewers who have and will continue to be critical to improving the quality of the articles in JNC. Thank you for agreeing to review, for the generosity of your time and scholarship in preparing your constructive critiques that consistently result in much improved manuscripts with crisper messages and more profound clinical implications. I also would like to extend an incredibly special note of gratitude to the outstanding support of the staff in the editorial office for their extraordinary professionalism, skill, dedication, and cheerful collaboration.

Over the last 10 years, the Journal has become the leading journal for nuclear cardiology. To achieve this, it has succeeded in attracting the best cutting-edge science in the field. The Journal has managed to exponentially increase the number of submissions and publications, not only from the USA but also internationally. While the impact of the Journal is not tied to any number, the increasing value of its Impact Factor coupled with the increasing number of submissions and publications mentioned above, is a testament to the overall quality of work published in the Journal. However, the Journal is not merely a scientific publication, it is also the official publication of the American Society of Nuclear Cardiology. As such, it has served an essential role in educating our community and allowing discussion regarding hot topics in our field—a role requiring not only the publication of original research but also editorials, reviews, review of the literature, images that teach, what is this image, cases from a busy nuclear cardiology laboratory, and many others. Finally, the Journal has played a vital role by engaging its readers in the field and allowed the formation of a lively community interested in nuclear cardiology. Thus is the legacy of the Journal of Nuclear Cardiology as a triple threat of science, education, and community with a singular goal of improving nuclear cardiology toward its full potential for the benefits of our patients.

What comes first to my mind with the nuclear cardiology community in general and the folks with JNC is that I always felt at home. This is not self-evident that a

non-physician by training receives such a warm welcome and is treated on eye level. However, as our field is so explicitly multi-disciplinary, it might be a recipe for success to maintain and further expand the network: radiochemists, technologists, physicists, computer scientists, and physicians (in arbitrary order and not complete).

Ranging from pre-clinical to clinical, spanning over several imaging modalities, processing as well as quantification topics, the community and its journal created a prospering network of its own: a system integrating (!) many multi-modal, multi-cultural, and multi-disciplinary elements which live not isolated and self-sufficient but interact as elements in the workflow. We beat with the same rhythm: hey, I am so proud to be a member of this team.

It has been an honor to serve as JNC’s associate editor over the past several years. JNC’s success has fueled the growth of my career in nuclear cardiology. JNC serves as the voice of the nuclear cardiology community, and it now has a worldwide presence, which is evident from its Editorial Board and publications. JNC has built on its solid foundation of scientific publications and has expanded to include high-quality reviews for continuing medical education, editorial, and exceptional case-based learning. The latter is likely to grow exponentially soon and perhaps the time is ripe for JNC-Cases! This would be best served by a platform that is electronic and allows for superior review of electronic media—videos and images alike. Over the last decade, the Journal has become a leader in the field of Nuclear Cardiology.

It was not an easy task for Ami to stand on the shoulders of two giants: Barry Zaret and George Beller. These two giants had raised the bar extremely high! JNC had very rapidly grown from scratch to a state-of-the-art Journal—that many of the specialists love to read and submit their original research too.

But Ami did raise the bar even further, and he brought the Journal to the next level.

First, he arranged a wonderful team (the Editorial Board)—a team like, ‘FC Barcelona or Bayern Munich’ in the world of soccer—both these soccer teams have one thing like Ami’s Editorial Board team: all these players in soccer (and physicians/scientists in nuclear cardiology) have one thing in common. The individuals are highly skilled and talented, and together form a talented team—the whole is more than the sum of the individual components.

Second, many innovations have been introduced, which made the Journal rise to number 1 in the field. The impact factor gradually increased over the years.

Third, Ami paid significant attention to the concept of “multi-modality imaging.”

Lastly, Ami created an atmosphere of team building, where everyone could take part.

It has been a great honor to be part of this journey to success! On a personal note, Ami has always been a great friend, a person you could always ask for help, and a great mentor from which we could learn a lot!

Dear Ami, thank you very much! Jeroen.

## **Disclosure**

*The author declares that he has no conflicts of Interest.*

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