First of all, may I welcome all our faithful readers to the first issue of Laser Therapy in 2017, the Year of the Cockerel! The first piece of news I have is that the International Editorial Board Members, who are the referees for the award decisions, have cast their votes for the Ohshiro-Laser Therapy Best and Good Paper Awards 2016, and the Ming-Chien Kao Awards for Young Researchers 2016, selected from all the papers published in Volume 25. The selection from Volume 26 selection was even more difficult than usual, according to the referees, because there were so many strong papers to choose from. The referees also commented favourably on the growth of papers on laser dentistry in the journal, and on the increasing number of papers from younger researchers. We believe that this bodes well for the continuing growth of the journal. The worthy winners for 2016 are as follows:

- The Ohshiro-Laser Therapy Best Paper category winner, attracting the prize of US $4,000, as chosen by the Laser Therapy Editorial Board is: “Mitochondrial Reactive Oxygen Species and Photodynamic Therapy”. By: Hiromu Ito, Hirofumi Matsui.


Our heartiest congratulations to the winners! For full details of the prizewinners and their prizes, and to see how you can get YOUR paper entered for this year’s awards, please see the section on the awards elsewhere in this issue of the journal.

While I am on the subject of the awards, I would like to express once again our gratitude to Professor Ming-Chien Kao for his personal financial contribution towards the awards that bear his name, and also the support he offers to young scientists. The latter is extremely important as it is essential that incentives drive good scientific research among the younger generations of medical researchers. However, we have to recognize that generosity is finite, and I have heard from Professor Kao that, with great regret and because of the increasing cost of living that affects us all, he must cut back on the amount for his award. Accordingly, from this volume, the amount of the three Ming-Chien Kao Awards to Young Researchers will be US $500 for each of the three chosen papers. It is still a significant sum of money, and this is even more significant when we must realize that this money doesn’t come from an institution, but from Professor Kao’s own pockets. Once again, my dear friend Ming-Chien, profound thanks for your unwavering support for the journal. Sadly, the same applies to our Ohshiro-Laser Therapy awards. The cost of putting the journal out continues to rise despite our efforts to cut back, and the last thing we want to do is to raise the subscription rates. With a great deal of regret, I have to announce...
that the Best Paper award from this volume will be US $2,000, and US $1,000 each for the two Ged Paper awards. Times are hard, and I hope you will all understand.

Spring is sprung (nearly)

For Laser Therapy’s readers in the northern hemisphere, at least, when you read this, we are approaching spring and as William Shakespeare wrote; “April, dressed in all his trim, / Hath put a spirit of youth in everything” (Sonnet 98). I hope it will put that “spirit of youth” into your medicoscientific writing as you put your data and results into order and get your next article ready to send in to us in the Editorial Team! But even in the southern hemisphere, the hot days of summer are giving way to the cooler days of autumn so perhaps that, too, can help revive “the spirit of youth.” Wherever we are, however, northern or southern hemisphere, it’s a season of transition as we move from the cold to comparative warmth, or from the heat to comparative coolness. But wherever you are, a very warm welcome from the Laser Therapy Editorial Team to the first issue of the 26th volume of our journal as we shake the dust of the 25th volume from our pens, typewriters or keyboards and embark on the next era of Laser Therapy.

International Phototherapy Association, IPTA 2017

As you will remember following the 2015 IPTA meeting in Nice, France, the 2017 meeting was due to have been held in Taiwan under the able presidency of Professor Chen-Jen Chang. As the Chairman of the International Organizing Committee, Prof Chang found in consultation with members that the original proposed date, which was later this year, was conflicting with a number of other important events and laser-related meetings. In consultation with other members of the Organizing Committee, including Prof Ming-Chien Kao, and following on from a proposal from some other members including Prof Carlo Fornaini, a suggestion was raised that IPTA 2017 could be held in conjunction with Prof Leonardo Longo’s 2017 Laser Florence meeting. Prof Longo was consulted, and was also in agreement (please see the following section), and it has thus been decided to hold IPTA 2017 in Florence this November concomitantly with Laser Florence 2017, thereby avoiding conflict with other meetings which could have proved dangerous regarding attendance by participants already committed to these conflicting meetings. The following IPTA meeting will therefore be held under Prof Chang’s presidency in 2019, which will allow time to make sure that it will not be in conflict with other meetings.

Laser Florence 2017

And that brings me onto Professor Leonard Longo’s November extravaganza, his annual, well-attended and pivotal meeting “Laser Florence 2017”, which this year celebrates its 29th edition. The meeting will be held, as always in the absolutely magnificent city of Florence, Italy, in the shadow of the Duomo, from November the 9th to the 11th, inclusive. For full details, please visit http://www.laserflorence.eu/

This year, as I am sure you are all already aware, it promises to be an even more extensive meeting than usual, since Prof Longo will also be presiding over the 22nd meeting of the International Society for Laser Surgery and Medicine (ISLSM) and the 4th meeting of the World Federation of Societies for Laser Medicine and Surgery (WFSLMS). In addition, as you just read in the preceding section, Prof Longo has magnanimously agreed to bring the 7th meeting of the International Phototherapy Association (IPTA) under the substantial umbrella of the Laser Florence 2017 meeting. There will be something for everyone at this meeting, and I can assure you that Prof Longo’s social programmes are amongst the best that my wife has ever enjoyed, in addition to the sheer glory of the evening programmes. Put these dates in your diaries, and plan to be there. You will be sorry if you miss it.

Laser Safety Rules and Regulations: an update

In my previous Editorial I promised you in this issue an article from an international laser expert on safety in and out of the operating room, Ms Penny Smalley, to bring us up to date on international safety standards for the use of lasers and light-based devices in medicine and surgery. A couple of months ago Penny wrote to me apologizing because some of the international agencies concerned were in the process of finalizing updates to their regulations, and therefore there would be no point in communicating outdated information. Accordingly I agreed that we would wait till all the discussion had completed, and the final sets of regulations had been published. I am therefore hoping that Penny’s article will grace issue 2 of Volume 26.
What is the Scope of *Laser Therapy*?

As the name of the journal suggests, *Laser Therapy* started life in 1988 as being exclusively devoted to all aspects of low level light therapy and photobiomodulation. However, as societies for lasers in surgery and medicine, such as the ISLSM, began to request that *Laser Therapy* could be their official organ, the scope of the journal was increased to accommodate papers from members of these societies on all facets of photosurgery as well as phototherapy. This was further extended to encompass photodynamic therapy (PDT), the kind of gray area between photosurgery and true phototherapy.

In a recent issue I wrote in an editorial at the end of 2015 that we should also include papers on aspects of energy-based medicine, including radiofrequency and magnetic therapy, as all of these devices and procedures are based on electromagnetic radiation and form part of the electromagnetic spectrum of which light is also a member. I would now like to qualify that by saying that the journal does need to keep within the bounds of at least the “laser” part of the title, or light. Accordingly, the Editorial Team will still consider papers on clinical aspects of energy-based medicine, provided that the authors include in their article a comparison between the clinical indications of these non-light-based devices and existing lasers or light-based devices (e.g., LEDs and IPL) as far as efficacy, ease of use and results are concerned, backed up with suitable references. That way, such papers can still be within the scope of the journal, and be of interest to our laser- and light-based clinicians and researchers.

End Notes

That brings us to the end of this Editorial. It only remains for me to thank you for having read this far, and I am sure that you’ll find something of interest in this and other issues of the journal. Don’t forget that the articles in all past issues can be read as free full text PDF downloads, and even printed out, when they are over 6 months from publication: earlier articles can still be viewed online, or can be purchased for download on a pay-per-view basis. I am very proud that our open access policy is among one of the best amongst all PubMed indexed journals. Moreover, when you consider that every paper published in the 25 volumes of the journal is available to view online, and all except the previous six months being completely free to download and print out, the sheer volume of historical interest alone is unique. Remember that articles from 1988, almost three decades of LLLT history, can be researched and downloaded. You will be very surprised to see that a great deal of what was being introduced then and discussed regarding photobiomodulation and low level light therapy is only now being recognized as “new”!

Simply visit https://www.jstage.jst.go.jp/browse/islm, enter your search item which could be an author or keywords, or a combination of both, and your search results will be swiftly displayed. Finally, please note you now only have nine months left in this year to get your article in to have a chance of winning one of our very worthwhile awards for Volume 26!

Happy writing!

Tokyo, Japan: March 2017