RINGING THE CHANGES: BRINGING *LASER THERAPY* UP TO DATE

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Dear Readers, here we are at the end of June, and we have galloped half way through 2017, or should I say 'flown', this being the Year of the Cockerel. For us in Japan,

the heat will soon be on us as we enter the hottest months of the year, and cool days of cherry blossom viewing are a distant memory. Many of us, myself included, will be breaking out our very own ecologically-sound (and economic) 'portable air conditioners', our folding fans, or 扇子 (*sensu*). These are not only convenient and efficient, but can be extremely decorative and can even bring a breath of cedar-scented air into a muggy subway coach, depending on what wood the spokes of the fans are made of, or what might have been added to the material comprising the body of the fan. So when the going gets hot and muggy, out come the fans.

As the above title suggests, we are making some changes to the basic elements of our journal to bring submissions to *Laser Therapy* into step with other major international journals. As I wrote in the previous Editorial, *Laser Therapy* was born in 1988, when computers were bulky systems and still restricted to an office-based environment and the idea of submitting articles on anything other than printed paper, or perhaps backed up with the text on a 5.25 inch very floppy disk, was unheard of. Papers had to be submitted in duplicate or triplicate, double spaced, and all illustrations were hard copies. There was a gradual move to having articles submitted on 3.5 inch (not so) floppy discs as a supplement to the printed word. This moved to more emphasis on the digital submission on floppies when we reached Volume 6, and email submissions started to be accepted although the majority of articles was still coming in as hard copies. However, now we are in the 21st century and the journal is in its 26th volume, so we thought it was time for a spring clean of both the journal's **Aims and Scope**, and also the **Notes for Contributors**. With this issue, these changes have been made, so please take a careful read

through them.

Aims and Scope

The Aims and Scope document has been updated to bring into play all the associations and societies who have voted to adopt the journal as their official organ, so please read this carefully. It will be the initial guide as to whether the article you are considering to send to the journal for publication is even within the scope of the journal. Be aware: if the article does not meet these initial criteria, then it will not even go out to the reviewers in the peer review process and will be returned to the author. The journal started out its life as being dedicated to laser therapy (LLLT) and photobiomodulation, however as we now have a number of photosurgically-based societies, their membership naturally wants to see their articles published in the journal and so the scope has been expanded to include all aspects of laser-and light-based medicine and surgery, in other words, all aspects of photosurgery, photodynamic therapy, low level light therapy and photobiomodulation. However, the scope does not include other non light-based, but energy-based, research or clinical reports, unless the article seeks to compare and contrast such devices with laser- or light-based indications. Please make it a point to read the Aims and Scope first when you are thinking of submitting an article to us, just to make sure the journal is right for your article.

Notes for Contributors

Once you are certain that your article matches the criteria for inclusion in the journal, then please study the updated Notes for Contributors to ensure that the article is put together in the way that the Editorial team want. This is not simply being picky, but will ensure that the article is structured correctly before we even consider the literary and scientific worth of the contents. The 'Notes' now deal with the finer points of email submission, plus the instructions for those who still wish to submit a hard copy version. Prospective

authors must follow the instructions on style, which includes the different sections from the title page, through the Abstract, Introduction, Materials (Subjects) and Methods and Results to the Discussion sections. Please note how references are marked in the text and listed at the end of the article. All journals are different, so please do check with the 'Notes' that you are marking and listing your references in the correct way for *Laser Therapy*, and with the correct punctuation. References from journals and books in print, eJournals and World Wide Web articles must all be cited in different styles, so once again read this section carefully. Quiet often there is confusion about what terms need italicized, particularly with bacteria and gene taxonomy: a section has been added on that for clarification how to go about referring to bacteria and genes.

Honesty is the Best Policy

An important part of the publication process is the **Publishing Agreement**, which we used to ask all authors to sign after acceptance of their article, and before their paper can appear in the journal. In the former days of hard copy Agreements, it was usual for all authors physically to sign the Agreement. Now that the Agreement is almost always submitted digitally, it is technically very difficult to get all the coauthors to sign under the name of the first author as authors may be in different countries necessitating the Agreement to be sent by airmail round all the authors before scanning the finally completed Agreement and sending it as an attachment to an email. It is currently the practice for the lead author to sign the agreement on behalf of all his or her coauthors, and to include a statement in the covering Letter to the Editor which is a necessary part of the electronic submission package, that all named authors participated equally in the preparation of the manuscript, and that all authors agree with the contents of the article and to its publication. It is therefore essential that the lead author follows Item 6 of the Publishing Agreement to the letter, namely; "If the work was prepared jointly the author agrees to inform co-authors of the terms of the agreement and to sign on their behalf." There have been cases where it turns out that the lead authors has submitted a paper in the name of all authors, but in actual fact, without their seeing or agreeing with the final version. This is fraudulent, and even if the actual content of the paper is scientifically correct, all authors must know what the final version includes and agree with it.

Sad Rise of Plagiarism: Another alarming trend is the increasing incidence of plagiarism in scientific writ-

ing, defined as using the words and work of some other author or authors, and passing it off as one's own. Put quite simply, this is intellectual theft. This includes copying and pasting large chunks of text or images from an internet source, such as Wikipedia, without acknowledging the origin. Somewhat less dishonest, but not by a great deal, is when an author submits a paper to journal A, gets it accepted, and then proceeds to send slightly altered, but perfectly recognizable, versions to other journals under a different title: this is self plagiarism. Software now exists which enables journals to check for both plagiarism and self-plagiarism by flagging passages which appear to be the same or very similar to others which have already been published. In addition to confirming that all authors have agreed with the contents and conclusions of the article, we therefore ask that the covering letter must also include a statement from the lead author that the paper contains completely original work, and has not been submitted to any other journal. There have been too many cases where plagiarism has been found out and exposed resulting in public withdrawal of the paper by the journal concerned, thereby placing a severe blot on the character of all the authors, not just the lead author. Please make sure that you don't fall into this trap. There is no harm at all in stating ideas put forward by another author or authors, as long as the origin of these ideas is fully acknowledged and the quotation of these ideas forms a valid part of the Introduction or Discussion sections of your own paper.

Falsification of Data: One last item, and then I would like to leave this very serious section of this issue's Editorial behind. I believe that even worse than plagiarism is the deliberate submission of articles containing knowingly fabricated experimental or clinical data. This is sheer dishonesty, verging on criminality. Anyone doing this deserves to be figuratively hung, drawn and quartered. It is not just the dishonesty involved when such authors deceive their peers, but the real possibility of harm to some unsuspecting clinician who bases their research project or treatment on the fabricated data, and even worse, brings harm to a patient through doing so. *Laser Therapy* prides itself on the honesty and openness of our peer review process, and will continue to do so. Thank you for reading this difficult-to-write section.

End Notes

Moving on to a happier subject, may I remind you that there are only 4 months left before Professor Leonardo Longo's fantastic November adventure will take place

in the magical city of Florence ... I am of course referring to the annual **Laser Florence** extravaganza. As I mentioned in my previous Editorial, this will be an even more spectacular event than usual, because it will comprise not one, not two, not even three, but FOUR important meetings:

- 29th edition of Laser Florence itself
- 22nd meeting, International Society for Laser Surgery and Medicine (ISLSM)
- 4th meeting, World Federation of Societies for Laser Medicine and Surgery (WFSLMS)
- 7th meeting, International Phototherapy Association (IPTA)

Professor Longo assures me that all is well in hand, and the programme is taking excellent shape with many of the keynote speakers already confirmed. Please do not miss this event! The dates are November the 9th (Thursday) to the 11th (Saturday), inclusive. In addition to the outstanding scientific programmes, there will be a top class social programme, and the city of Florence has something for absolutely everyone: browsing all the multi-featured stalls on the medieval Ponte Vecchio over the River Amo, the oldest bridge spanning the Amo; gazing up in awe at the magnificent cupola of the Duomo, and other fabulous archi-

tectural marvels; tucking into the famous Bistecca alla Fiorentina (Florence steak), or T-bone steak, but be warned, you are supposed to share this with others (unless you have a truly enormous appetite!); ensuring good luck by stroking the highly polished nose of the Famous Bronze Boar, Fontana del Porcellino; or indulging in the olfactory overload and perhaps purchasing some beautifully scented soap or lotions at the Pharmacia Santa Maria Novella, dating from 1221, and still going strong as an actual pharmacy. So put these dates in your diary, come a little early or leave a little later to get some serious site-seeing in, and check up on the programme as it expands on <http://www.laser-florence.eu/>.

So that brings us to the end of this Editorial. Remember you have only another two issues to get your paper published in Volume 26 to be in with a chance for one of our worthy cash prizes and writing awards, the **Ohshiro-Laser Therapy Best Paper / Good Papers awards**, and the **Ming-Chien Kao Awards for Young Researchers**. For full details, see the announcement elsewhere in this issue of the journal.

Happy writing!!