EDITORIAL, 6.4
THE LIGHT BRIGHTENS

The unification of the two international associations devoted to laser therapy, the International Laser Therapy Association (ILTA) and the International Society for Low Power Laser Application in Medicine (ISLPLAM) as the World Association for Laser Therapy (WALT), is without question an earth-shaking development in our determined march toward global understanding of the science of laser photoactivation and the clinical applications of laser therapy. Doctor Mary Dyson and Professor Giovanni Galletti, immediate Past Presidents of the ILTA and ASLPLAM respectively, deserve all the accolade for their wisdom and foresight in bringing the two groups together during the epic meeting held at Barcelona, Spain, in May of 1994. It is my estimate that prior to this historic unification, ILTA and ISLPLAM have individually and separately achieved remarkable successes in advancing the field of laser therapy. Thus, unifying the two bodies brightens the light because the new association, WALT, represents a union of two shining stars that had already achieved an impressive amount of brilliance.

A reflection on the past and recent history of the ILTA and the ISLPLAM quickly brings to mind the admirable contributions of Dr. Toshio Ohshiro and the remarkable achievements of Dr. Kazuhiko Atsumi, each of whom nurtured the ILTA and ISLPLAM respectively, and witnessed the events at Barcelona; the robust "back-bone" of the ILTA, Dr. R. Glen Calderhead, who as Secretary-General of the WALT remains a major driving force in the new organization, and of course Dr. Kevin C. Moore, the ever-present and ever-hardworking organizer, who continues to serve our new organization as WALT Treasurer and Business Manager for Laser Therapy. Thus, it is a personal delight and honour to be associated with these highly dedicated and esteemed individuals, and to be elected Co-Editor-in-Chief for the journal. Judging from the dedication and commitment of Dr. Mario Treles, the newly elected President of WALT, and the enthusiasm of Senior Editor-in-Chief Professor Osamu Kemotsu, I am confident that we will achieve even greater successes in this new era.

However, it must be acknowledged that the tasks ahead of us are tremendous. As a leading international journal in the field, it is our responsibility to illuminate the minds of clinicians, technicians, and even government bureaucrats involved either in the use or regulation of low intensity lasers in the field of low reactive-level laser therapy, LLLT. We rely heavily on the assistance of the World Association for Laser Therapy to achieve this illumination, as the journal is after all the official organ of the WALT. Any serious thoughts about this onerous task readily bring to mind the realization that the United States of America, a nation that pioneered laser technology and laser surgery, is yet to see approval of the clinical usage of laser therapy by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), although the weight of scientific and clinical evidence is growing heavier and stronger. Thus, a nation of well over 220,000,000 people, a nation that depends on up-to-the-minute technology in every facet of its existence, has at least for the time being refused to embrace the use of low intensity lasers for therapeutic purposes because of the perception that the scientific foundation for this form of therapy remains 'soft'. In this respect, our immediate challenge is not to engage in any philosophical or ideological argument in support of this emerging therapy, but to meet the expected standard of scientific rigor in the U.S. as demanded by the FDA. It can be argued that this standard has been met and even exceeded by several research investigators. However, the incessant advertisement of laser therapy as a heal-all and cure-all device muddles the issue and at best creates a bad image for this promising non-invasive therapy.

LLLT can surely gain the desired recognition if bogus claims are discouraged, avoided and abandoned by all - clinicians, equipment manufacturers, and rhapsodic research investigators. It is my hope that the brighter light we share today will enable us to uncover these disturbing practices and to discourage and prevent them whenever possible. Furthermore, it is my hope that the brightened light before us will illuminate the minds of many, and hence facilitate further discovery of the clinical values and mechanisms of action of laser therapy. Finally, it is my aim and aspiration that we can further brighten the light to ensure that it permeates those regions of the world which hitherto have remained unaware of this non-invasive therapy. These I consider a part of my responsibility as Co-Editor-In-Chief.
I would like to conclude my first Editorial for this journal by first of all echoing the words of my illustrious predecessor, Dr. Toshio Ohshiro, and encouraging the more active submission of papers, both experimental and clinical, based firmly on the rules and guidelines laid out in the *Instructions for Contributors* which can be found in the final pages of every issue of the journal. In preparing your submission, please be certain that the peer review process is one on which the journal’s reputation is firmly based, but if the papers are not written in the correct style to start with, the chances are that they will not even get into the review procedure. Above all, please be meticulous in your reporting of your parameters, so that others may attempt to reproduce and verify your findings. This is the cornerstone on which scientific reporting is based, and inappropriate or inaccurate reporting will only help our critics, giving them more ammunition to use against the scientific validity of laser therapy and photobioactivation. For clinical studies I would ask that the same rules apply as far as parameters are concerned. We will welcome clinical reports, even of an anecdotal form rather than experimental, always provided the basic rules of style are followed. For example, there is nothing more time consuming in the editorial process than having to rewrite all the references from alphabetical, cited by the Author’s name in brackets in the text, to the style required by *Laser Therapy*, namely by order of appearance in the article, listed in numerical order in the References section. Clinical reports, even those appearing as a Letter to the Editor or Short Communication, often provide an interesting incentive for the researcher to investigate the action or pathway by which the laser therapy has had its reported effect.

Secondly, I just wish, on behalf of the Editorial and Production team, to wish you all the very best of fortune for 1995. I am happy to be able to report that our subscriptions are on the rise, and this can only be good for both the quality and quantity of papers which appear in the journal, and help the Publishers to maintain the subscription fees at a reasonable level. A very Happy New Year to you all!

*Kansas City, December 1994.*