

Milestones in the Evolution of the *JCRS*

From a newsletter to a well-respected, monthly journal.

BY STEPHEN A. OBSTBAUM, MD

Among his many accomplishments, Stephen A. Obstbaum, MD, was one of the earliest surgeons to perform cataract and IOL surgery. He was a founding member of the American Intra-Ocular Implant Society (AIOIS), served as its President from 1987 to 1989, and became the editor of the organization's journal in 1981. For the next 20 years, Steve was integral to the publication's transition from an insignificant US quarterly release to a highly respected, peer-reviewed journal published jointly by the ASCRS and the ESCRS.

Steve conducts a busy clinical practice and has a special interest in glaucoma that has earned him an international reputation of excellence. One of the most humble leaders I know, Steve may be relied upon to credit his colleagues, and this article is no exception.

—Herve M. Byron, MD

Today, it is rare to read an ophthalmic publication that does not contain an article on or a reference to IOL implantation. Yet, only 30 years ago, articles on this topic were the exception in the established journals of ophthalmology, and interest in the topic was limited to a relatively small group of ophthalmologists. A major turning point occurred with the establishment of the AIOIS. Before the organization's founding, a federation of societies in Europe (the European Intraocular Implant Lens Council and the International Intraocular Implant Club) were the major groups educating ophthalmologists about IOLs.

The AIOIS was formed in response to burgeoning interest in IOL implantation among US ophthalmologists. The society's first major meeting was an opportunity for surgeons to exchange ideas and information on IOLs. Recognizing a need by physicians for frequent updates on this emerging field, the leadership of the AIOIS began publishing a newsletter. The success and growth of that publication led to the establishment of a journal.

THE JOURNAL

Kenneth Hoffer, MD, was the managing editor of the quarterly *American Intra-Ocular Implant Society Journal*.

"The [American Intra-Ocular Implant Society] was formed in response to burgeoning interest in implantation among US ophthalmologists."

In 1977, he wrote, "The subject of lens implantation is now being lived by 20% of this profession and seriously looked at by the remaining 80%. ... Even if you are not interested in this subject at present, we hope to provide you with the latest information in this changing field."¹

Robert Drews, MD, assumed the position of scientific editor during the same year. In his inaugural editorial, he wrote, "The goal and policy of the *American Intra-Ocular Implant Society Journal* is to provide scientific articles and information to the profession as rapidly as possible. ... The field of lens implantation is an exciting one. This is your *Journal* and we hope it can reflect the excitement of scientific achievement."²

In 1978, Henry Clayman, MD, became the second scientific editor. He assumed the post at a critical time in the history of the AIOIS and the field of lens implantation in the US. The FDA Investigational Study of IOLs

demanded compliance with stringent reporting standards. In his first editorial, Dr. Clayman wrote, "Hopefully scrupulous accumulation of information and attention to implant detail will enhance our skills and results, benefiting the most important group, namely our patients."³ During his tenure, Dr. Clayman introduced the process of peer review for the journal's articles, and the publication was listed in the Index Medicus, Vision Index, and Excerpta Medica.

I became the journal's editor in 1981. That January, I wrote, "The goals of the *Journal* are to provide a forum to present original ideas, to introduce new techniques, and to critically rethink unresolved problems. ... We hope our tenure will be productive so that we may achieve our goals of education in implantation and that you, in turn, will be stimulated by our efforts."⁴ During my 20 years with the publication, the journal grew in popularity, and it published manuscripts from international colleagues as well as from our members in the US. The number of submitted manuscripts increased dramatically,⁵ necessitating the publication of six issues annually.

When the leadership of the AIOIS decided to change the organization's name to the American Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgery as a way of embracing the emerging latter field, the name of the publication became the *Journal of Cataract and Refractive Surgery (JCRS)*. In my editorial of January 1986, I wrote, "Since the majority of our members who perform cataract and implant surgery are also interested in the evolving field of refractive surgery, this step represents our commitment to focus on the professional needs of our membership. It also emphasizes our continued effort to promote the art and science of anterior segment surgery and to impact the educational goals and political concerns our profession faces today."⁵

A MERGER

The hallmark of a venture's continued success is the infusion of new ideas and talent. An important milestone in the life of the journal was naming Douglas Koch, MD, to the position of associate editor. His contributions were immediately apparent as he improved the quality of the publication's refractive aspects.

Dr. Koch's arrival coincided with another milestone. At a breakfast in Hong Kong, Emanuel Rosen, FRCSE, who was the editor of the *European Journal of Implant and Refractive Surgery*, and I discussed our experiences as editors of our respective journals. I suggested merging our journals into a new publication. To my delight, he accepted this invitation as a viable option. It was then our task to approach the governing

boards of our respective organizations to determine if they would be willing to support the change. The areas of concern included governance, finance, operations, and geographic sensitivity.

"In 2005, 1,006 manuscripts were submitted for consideration. ... This year marks the 10th anniversary of the new *JCRS*."

Fortunately, the boards of the ASCRS and the ESCRS decided to endorse the merger, and the result has been an outstanding success. Dr. Rosen and I served as the editors with Dr. Koch and initially Julian Stevens, FRCS, and then Thomas Kohnen, MD, becoming the associate editors. The *JCRS* became a monthly publication. In 2005, 1,006 manuscripts were submitted for consideration.

AN ANNIVERSARY

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the new *JCRS*. The present editors are Drs. Koch and Rosen, and the associate editors are Dr. Kohnen and Nick Mamalis, MD. Under their leadership and with the support of a talented, dedicated editorial staff led by Christine Ford and Carol Fitzpatrick, the *JCRS* has continued to thrive. It is appropriate to acknowledge the backing of the officers and boards of our societies and the leadership of David Karcher, ASCRS Executive Director, and Mary D'Ardis, ESCRS Executive Director, in helping us to fulfill our goal of producing a credible educational publication that benefits our members and their patients. ■

Section Editor Herve M. Byron, MD, is Clinical Professor for the Department of Ophthalmology at the New York University School of Medicine in New York. Dr. Byron may be reached at (212) 249-8494; byronmd@mac.com.



Stephen A. Obstbaum, MD, is Chairman, Department of Ophthalmology, Lenox Hill Hospital, New York, and Professor of Ophthalmology, NYU School of Medicine. He acknowledged no financial interest in the material presented herein. Dr. Obstbaum may be reached at (212) 687-4106; saobstbaum@aol.com.



1. Hoffer KH. Editorial. *J Am Intraocul Implant Soc.* 1977;3:1:1.
2. Drews RC. Editorial. *J Am Intraocul Implant Soc.* 1977;3:1:2-3.
3. Clayman H. Editorial. *J Am Intraocul Implant Soc.* 1978;4:1:2.
4. Obstbaum SA. Editorial. *J Am Intraocul Implant Soc.* 1981;7:1:20.
5. Obstbaum SA. Editorial. *J Cataract Ref Surg.* 1986;12:17.