

## Current focus and future advances for *Annals of Palliative Medicine*

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I am honored and humbled to have been appointed as Editor-in-Chief of *Annals of Palliative Medicine*. Since its establishment by Dr. Howard Smith and under the leadership of Dr. Zhi-Hua Zhu (1), the journal has enjoyed tremendous success with increases in readership and high-quality manuscript submissions over its first two years since its debut issue in April 2012.

*Annals of Palliative Medicine* is an international, peer-reviewed publication with a focus on multimodality therapy, biomarkers, imaging, biology, pathology, clinical care, and technical advances related to palliative medicine. The journal has published articles that describe new findings in the field of palliative medicine and provide current and practical information on palliative medicine. *Annals of Palliative Medicine* features an open access policy that allows readers from the medical science community to utilize all material published in this journal freely without obstacle for immediate open access.

I do not take my newfound responsibilities to authors and readers of *Annals of Palliative Medicine* lightly. In the two months since I have assumed the position of Editor-in-Chief, the journal has undergone many exciting changes and initiatives. Several experts across a variety of palliative medicine fields have been added to our Editorial Board that has already included leaders in a broad spectrum of palliative medicine fields. A “Message from the Editor-in-Chief” section has been added to the journal, and in future issues it will feature a succinct review of the most important publications within each issue of *Annals of Palliative Medicine*. Furthermore, new columns and focuses are being added to the journal in the upcoming issues that promise to be of wide appeal to readers.

Approximately 50% of patients with malignancies receive radiation therapy during the course of their disease (2). Radiation therapy is widely used to palliate pain from bone, liver, or adrenal metastasis, improve or stabilize symptoms from brain metastasis and spinal cord compression, control bleeding, and improve dyspnea and cough (3). Radiation oncologists are increasingly becoming integrated into palliative care teams and have developed recent guidelines for palliative radiotherapy (4).

Recognizing the critical role that palliative radiation therapy has in the care of patients with advanced malignancies, *Annals of Palliative Medicine* will be launching a new and recurring column entitled “Palliative Radiotherapy” beginning with the October 2014 journal issue. This column will be led by Dr. Edward Chow from Odette Cancer Centre, Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre in Toronto and Dr. Stephen Lutz from Blanchard Valley Regional Cancer Center in Findlay. The column will focus on original research manuscripts and timely review articles relating to palliative radiotherapy, and it will also include editorials and commentaries on recently published trials and studies on palliative radiotherapy in *Annals of Palliative Medicine* and other journals that are of interest to you, the readers of *Annals of Palliative Medicine*.

Pain is a common symptom of advanced disease across a plethora of common and uncommon medication conditions and disorders. Since its inception, *Annals of Palliative Medicine* has been a leader in reporting new clinical and translational original findings in pain medicine, and the journal has published several recent review articles (5) and national guidelines (6) on pain management. Beginning in early 2015, we will launch a new column entitled “Pain

Management” that will be lead by Dr. Salahadin Abdi from The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston.

We are also working to expand our content of original research manuscripts, review articles, and editorials relating to palliative surgery and interventional procedures, which play a key and increasing role in palliative care. Similarly, we will be expanding our content relating to *quality of life* and patient reported outcomes. The World Health Organization defines palliative care as “an approach that improves the quality of life of patients and their families facing the problem associated with life-threatening illness, through the prevention and relief of suffering by means of early identification and impeccable assessment and treatment of pain and other problems, physical, psychosocial and spiritual” (7). As such, *Annals of Palliative Medicine* will have on increased focus on quality of life, and we are actively soliciting articles on this pivotal aspect of palliative medicine.

I encourage investigators and clinicians alike to submit high-quality articles pertinent to palliative medicine from fields such as nutrition, surgery, public health, human genetics, basic sciences, education, sociology, and nursing to *Annals of Palliative Medicine*. I also encourage authors and prospective guest editors to submit proposals for high-impact special issues on proposed specific palliative medicine topics. *Annals of Palliative Medicine* will continue to employ an online and user-friendly submission processes. I will prioritize an expedited review process for authors, which will ensure that important articles are available in a timely manner to our readers. I will continue to work to provide readers of *Annals of Palliative Medicine* with informative, educational, and cutting-edge original research and review articles in all areas related to palliative medicine. I encourage feedback, comments, and suggestions from readers to improve the journal, and I will continually strive to best serve your needs.

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It is my honor and privilege to serve as the new Editor-in-Chief of *Annals of Palliative Medicine*. I am indebted to the readers, authors, and editorial teams of *Annals of Palliative Medicine* who have contributed to the success of the journal to date. I look forward to working closely with, Dr. Zhu, our Associate Editors, our prestigious and dedicated Editorial Board and Editorial Office, the chairpersons of our new columns and expanding focuses, reviewers, authors, and readers to further increase the scope and impact that *Annals of Palliative Medicine* has within the field of palliative care.

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