Editorial

Innovation through Advances in Radiation Oncology

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The American Society for Radiation Oncology (ASTRO) is at its core a society primed for innovation. It follows that in anticipating the needs of its diverse international community and the patients they serve, ASTRO has launched its first entirely open access journal, Advances in Radiation Oncology. Advances is a natural complement to ASTRO’s established peer-reviewed journals: the International Journal of Radiation Oncology, Biology and Physics.

Figure 1 Scope of ASTRO’s journals.

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Oncology, Biology, Physics (the Red Journal) and Practical Radiation Oncology (PRO). Advances is a gold open access journal, meaning that, after diligent peer review and likely author revisions, authors pay a fee ranging from $750 to $2,000 US to publish the article that will be free forever for readers to view and download rather than subscribers paying a fee to receive the content. Through this open access model, complete access to content published in Advances is available to those who can access the Internet. We endeavor to broaden the scope of our audience by removing financial barriers to access. It will be particularly beneficial in nations where access has previously been limited and also to patients and their loved ones looking for treatment information.

Advances aims to round out the editorial scope of the Red Journal and PRO. The “Scope of ASTRO’s Journals” diagram (Fig 1) illustrates the relationship among the journals and the flow of content. In addition to teaching cases and prospective and retrospective clinical trials, the Advances editorial team seeks forward-thinking scientific manuscripts that pose stimulating questions to fuel future research in radiation oncology. Manuscripts exploring practice transformation in radiation oncology secondary to effects of health care reform and changing demographics are encouraged. Reports of the use of informatics and analytics in radiation oncology practice and research are also well suited for submission to Advances.

We are fortunate to be working closely with the talented editors of PRO and the Red Journal to make submitting your research as easy as possible. We have intentionally made our instructions to authors as similar to each other as possible to allow authors to easily submit to the venue best for their research without a lot of reformatting. We have also enabled a cascade feature whereby the editors of all 3 journals have the ability to recommend that your manuscript be passed along to another ASTRO journal seamlessly (only with author approval, of course). This way, if the Red Journal receives a paper they believe is best suited for Advances, they can transfer it complete with reviews to us, thus saving authors and reviewers valuable time. Likewise, if a paper arrived addressing a quality and safety issue we think best belongs in PRO, we have the ability to transfer that to PRO.

Although traditional print publishing has existed since the 1600s, open access publishing is a relatively new platform. Whereas subscription-based scholarly publishing requires significant startup capital and a well-financed constituency willing to pay for content, open access publishing has significantly fewer startup costs, effectively allowing any interested party to launch a journal. Novelty breeds excitement and fear; as with any progressive approach, it is challenging to be compared with the traditional discourse. However, Advances is proof of a specific need in the radiation oncology community that cannot be fulfilled through conventional methods of publication. Practice-changing scientific discoveries and clinical experiences will have the ability to reach a vast global audience.

The journal of the future continues to evolve, but we know for certain that those readers want efficient and fluid access to content seamlessly connected through scientific and social networks. We are also seeing shifts away from older metrics, such as the Impact Factor, that aim to judge all the articles published within a journal, toward more article-level metrics, such as Altmetrics, (Fig 2) that look at the reach of a specific article. Integration of technologies will continue to change our definitions of commonplace objects, activities, and actions. Advances is our preparation for that future by creating a journal devoted to the publication of cutting-edge science that will have the flexibility in format to remain responsive to changes over time. Your
support is very much appreciated. To volunteer to be a reviewer or if you have other suggestions or comments, we welcome them at advances@astro.org.

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