EDITOR IN CHIEF’S REPORT
Robert Orenstein, DO, Chair

Since I began my role as AOA’s editor in chief in January 2014, I have had the opportunity to visit with numerous colleagues at meetings within and outside our osteopathic community. This past year I have attended the AOA’s annual conference, AACOM-AODME meeting, several regional osteopathic medical education meetings, and most recently, the White House Forum on Antibiotic Stewardship as AOA’s professional representative. I have used these opportunities to network with academic and community researchers and to encourage engagement with the JAOA. As our profession grows, numerous opportunities are being created for educational, clinical, patient safety and outcomes based research. We recently reached out to all of our academic centers to participate in our ENGAGE Initiative, to engage all our osteopathic academic centers in scientific publication.

Each year my objective is to determine whether today’s JAOA is better than last years. As we develop metrics to track our progress in the coming years, let’s reflect on the past years accomplishments.

Highlights from the past year
The JAOA, like the osteopathic profession has witnessed significant changes within the past year focused on improving the product we deliver to our members, subscribers and the community at large. Since last year’s report, the JAOA has undergone structural and functional changes, to improve its appeal and relevance to the healthcare community.

A better JAOA starts with better research and commentary. Our editors and staff continue to promote the JAOA to potential authors. A broader repertoire of manuscripts with a limited publication size, has allowed us to increase the selectivity of manuscripts we publish. Compared with 2 years ago, the acceptance rate has dropped from 69% in 2013 to 54% today. We continue to pursue original research and pertinent reviews over case reports and commentary. To improve our research standards, we have secured a consultant biostatistician to review more complex manuscript methods and analyses.

Likewise, we are providing more resources to authors and peer reviewers, from manuscript templates to training modules. We’ve surveyed our peer reviewers and will be responding to their feedback, beginning with more frequent e-mails and tips for conducting peer reviews. We hope to attract additional resources to expand our outreach and engagement efforts through a peer reviewer roadshow, in which the JAOA editors and staff facilitate training workshops on scientific writing and review at regional or national meetings such as the AACOM- AODME conference and OMED.

The Virtual JAOA - Online presence
Over the past year we have reduced our print expenses by reducing the number of print copies of our journal which are sent by mail and hope to further reduce this as there is greater uptake of the electronic version by younger audiences. The JAOA is mailed to approximately 28,000 people, most of whom are primary care physicians and members of the AOA. However, with 121,000 people receiving the JAOA’s monthly electronic table of contents in their inboxes, we recognize the importance of our online presence. Thus, with the April 2015 issue, we launched a new website, featuring key elements such as:

- Fully responsive design for mobile and tablet devices (more than 40% of visitors access the JAOA on a mobile or tablet device)
- Modern design with bold illustrations, including a refreshed and more modern logo
• Customizable content on the homepage, including featured content and relevant announcements
• Search engine optimization, which provides search results that now include recommended additional topics related to visitors’ search terms
• Topic collections, which provide an easy way to access research on popular topics

Coming soon, we will be adding JAOA archived content in searchable, full-color PDF files.

New sections and partnerships
I have reported before on the sections of Health Policy and In My View, which launched in 2014. We continue to provide avenues for publication through new sections. This year we launched SURF, for Students, Residents, and Fellows to publish research, essays, and other content relevant to their roles and experiences in medical training. We will soon be launching a clinical review section, which succinctly highlights clinical questions and evidence-based recommendations which we think will be very useful for busy physicians.

Later this year, we will also be launching our new co-branded medical education section with AACOM, which will be overseen by our newest JAOA associate editor, Elizabeth K. McClain, PhD, EdS, MPH. Dr McClain brings a wealth of experience in education, and her enthusiasm for this important collaboration between the JAOA and AACOM is unparalleled.

We have also met and are in the initial phase of a partnership with the American Journal of Pharmacy Education to highlight interprofessional education, tools, and practice.

Visibility
All of these improvements and activities are meant to increase the appeal and quality of the JAOA in a very competitive publishing world. We are closely working with the AOA’s media relations team to promote JAOA content in numerous media outlets. For example, a January 2015 review from Jamil Bashir, MD, and colleagues on platelet-rich plasma therapy was featured in an article in National Pain Report. A May 2015 article from Lisa Hodge, PhD, and colleagues was extensively covered by several media outlets, including ScienceDaily.com, which has 2 million unique visitors annually. We will continue to promote high quality research publications which enhance awareness of osteopathic medicine.

In the new media world, we are regularly linking to articles on LinkedIn and Twitter. After hosting our first Twitter chat on medical education with Dr Tyler Cymet from AACOM, which saw 152 posts with more than 250,000 impressions, we gained several new followers (total followers 1085 as of June 15).

Northup Award
Each year, the Journal awards the best published manuscript the Northup Award to honor the outstanding work of Dr Northup and his contributions to the profession. On Saturday, July 18, we will be presenting the George W. Northup, DO, Medical Writing Award to Brian F. Degenhardt, DO, and colleagues for their manuscript, “Preliminary Findings on the Use of Osteopathic Manipulative Treatment: Outcomes During the Formation of the Practice-Based Research Network, DO-Touch.NET”
Practice-based research networks represent an opportunity for community based practitioners to demonstrate quality and the effectiveness of osteopathic medicine. Similar networks, created in the 1990’s and NIH supported, such as the Community Based Clinical Programs for Research on AIDS help create the evidence base for much of today’s practice of HIV medicine. They represent a golden opportunity for osteopathic research.

Challenges/Opportunities
The JAOA has also experienced significant personnel changes over the past year. Three new associate editors started; our manuscript editing staff has turned over and we have a new managing editor and director. These dedicated individuals are the backbone of the Journal. They are always helpful and courteous, especially to those dissatisfied with the disposition of their manuscripts. We continue to face many challenges. We must continuously be vigilant and seek out new and interesting manuscripts. Some of our contributors have expressed frustration with the JAOA when their manuscripts are not accepted; some peer reviewers fail to respond in a timely fashion, which impacts our turnaround time in providing decisions to authors; and we do not yet have the multimedia presence we desire. There remains much work to be done.