

Journal of Pediatric Psychology: A Brief History (1969–1999)

Anne E. Kazak, PhD

The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and The University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine

The *Journal of Pediatric Psychology (JPP)* marks its 25th anniversary this year (2000). Although this year's volume number is 25, its predecessor, the newsletter *Pediatric Psychology*, dates from 1969. This achievement in publishing, sponsored by and in close partnership with the Society of Pediatric Psychology (SPP, now Division 54 of the American Psychological Association) warrants reflection on the history of the journal, from its early inception to its current level of acceptance and maturity. The SPP was founded in 1969 by Logan Wright, Lee Salk, and Dorothea Ross, just over thirty years ago. Although pediatric psychology is a relatively new subspecialty, the field has achieved a clear position within psychology more broadly and across health care environments. The journal has mastered all its major developmental milestones along the way. Challenging stages were evident and overcome, always with the developmentally appropriate support of a caring parent, the SPP.

The process by which a publication evolves from a newsletter to a recognized scientific publication is generally documented by minutes, programs, and other records of meetings. Perhaps more often, the history is inseparable from the participants, whose recollections and narratives pique the curiosity of colleagues and are passed along to subsequent generations of trainees. This article represents an attempt to outline the history of *JPP* by summarizing information about the sequence of editors, their training and interests, and the themes and changes

that characterized their editorial terms. This information is not, to my knowledge, condensed in any other format.

Five former Editors of *JPP* were identified and their terms confirmed: Diane J. Willis, PhD, 1973–1975, Don Routh, PhD, 1976–1982, Gerald Koocher, PhD, 1983–87; Michael Roberts, PhD, 1988–1992, and Annette La Greca, PhD, 1993–1997. The current Editor, Anne E. Kazak, PhD, 1998–2002, invited each of them to assist with the preparation of this article. All agreed.

Prior to being officially designated the *Journal of Pediatric Psychology* in 1975, a newsletter called *Pediatric Psychology* was first distributed in 1969 and edited by Gail Gardner, PhD, at New York Hospital, Cornell Medical Center. She was succeeded by Allan Barclay, PhD, from St. Louis University, through 1973. Dr. Gardner died in 1984. However, Dr. Barclay was contacted and agreed to contribute to the preparation of this article.

Each of the former *JPP* editors received a questionnaire. The first part of the questionnaire consisted of a chart in which information regarding the editor's affiliation, volume numbers, graduate school and internship, research interests during his or her term, and associate editors was requested. The second part consisted of three open-ended questions: (1) What were a few key developments in the journal that occurred during your term? (2) What themes were prominent and reflected in the journal during your watch? (3) How do you measure the maturity of a journal? Former editors were asked if they had any other materials that might be helpful for the project. The questionnaire concluded with a request for a photograph of each editor.

All correspondence should be sent to: Anne E. Kazak, Director, Department of Psychology, The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, 4th Floor Wood Center, 34th and Civic Center Blvd., Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19104-4399. E-mail: kazak@emil.chop.edu



Anne E. Kazak, Ph.D.

The current editor compiled the information from the questionnaire and reviewed archival materials sent by the former editors. These materials included correspondence, minutes from Executive Board meetings of the Society of Pediatric Psychology, and copies of past journals and newsletters. Published summaries of journal activity were also utilized in the preparation of this report (La Greca, 1997; Roberts, 1992). These reports contain valuable empirical data on the types of papers submitted, the theoretical perspectives reflected, and detailed documentation of the sources of papers and characteristics of authors. Elkins and Roberts (1988) provided a detailed content analysis of the journal for 1976 to 1985. Finally, a draft of this article was distributed to the former editors for their assistance in completing information and providing feedback.

A Timeline of the *Journal of Pediatric Psychology*

From the outset, psychologists interested in work in pediatric settings found supportive colleagues and a home within Division 12 of APA (Clinical Psychology) and its Section 1 (Clinical Child Psychology). The activities of members whose work centered on

pediatric patients and settings were promoted by an interest group within Section 1 and by the identification of a representative to the Section 1 Board of Directors.

The earliest roots of the journal appear to date to 1968. At that time, two psychologists interested in pediatric psychology negotiated with Division 12 for a sharing of resources to facilitate the development of a newsletter, *Pediatric Psychology*. These pioneers were Allan Barclay, a founding member, newsletter editor and Chair of Section 1, and Pediatric Psychology representative on the Board of Directors for Section 1 and to Division 12, and Lee Salk, President-Elect of the Interest Group on Pediatric Psychology.

Pediatric Psychology was edited initially by Gail Gardner and subsequently by Allan Barclay. Gardner, while she was editor, was at the Cornell University Medical College in New York City. She was best known for her work in the area of children and hypnosis and was among the first to demonstrate that hypnosis was a valuable intervention for children, and one that could facilitate coping in pediatric illness (Routh, 1984). Barclay was, at that time, a psychologist in the Departments of Psychology, Pediatrics, and Psychiatry at St. Louis University and subsequently became Chief Psychologist at the Cardinal Glennon Memorial Hospital for Chil-



Diane J. Willis, Ph.D.



Don Routh, Ph.D.

dren, also in St. Louis. When Barclay was elected Secretary-Treasurer of Division 12, he requested that Diane Willis assume the editorship.

Indeed, Diane Willis mentored the transition of the newsletter *Pediatric Psychology* into *JPP* in the early 1970s. Beginning in 1973, four issues were published annually. She was affiliated, then as now, with the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center and received her PhD at the University of Oklahoma and interned at the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center. Her research interests were child abuse and developmental disabilities. As associate editor, Dr. Willis selected Arlene Schaefer, also affiliated with the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center. Dr. Willis initiated several steps that were important to an emerging journal, including establishing an editorial board to use peer review and to broaden the scope of papers submitted. She also solicited articles from many known leaders in the fields of pediatric and clinical child psychology. For a period of time the SPP was affiliated with the clinical child section of Division 12 of APA, before becoming a section of its own in 1980. The journal reflected that these two subspecialties were less clearly delineated from each other than they are today. Another major accomplishment of the journal during Willis's term was a series of special papers and issues, each on topics that were in-

novative and emergent during the 1970s, including child abuse, pediatric neuropsychology, enuresis and encopresis, death and dying.

The journal endured financial peril during its early years. Funds for the journal came from general operating revenue of the SPP, which itself was a young organization struggling for financial viability. Minutes of the SPP Executive Board meetings during this period reflect concerns about meeting publication costs, discussing whether an increase in dues was necessary, increasing distribution, and soliciting advertisements to offset costs (SPP Executive Committee Minutes, 9/6/72, 12/11/72, 12/12/73, 12/5/74). Drs. Willis and Barclay were active in fundraising directly to cover journal expenses. The uncertain future of the journal is reflected in a letter to Dr. Willis from Dr. Barclay in which he wrote, "The newsletter is at the printers. How to finance it is in the lap of the gods . . . (Barclay, personal communication, 3/9/73).

Don Routh, at that time at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in the Department of Pediatrics, began his first of two terms as editor in 1976. Dr. Routh received his PhD from the University of Pittsburgh in 1967 and his internship training at the University of Oklahoma Sciences Center and had primary research interests in the area of pain and hyperactivity. Gary Mesibov, PhD, also at



Gerald Koocher, Ph.D.



Michael Roberts, Ph.D.

the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, was the associate editor. Phyllis Magrab led the successful negotiation of a 7-year contract with a professional publisher (Plenum) in 1979. This contract was central in the journal's financial success. The journal's appearance was similar to other psychology journals at the time, as opposed to the less polished look of the previous newsletter. The cover color reflected its editors' home university, "Carolina Blue." During Dr. Routh's term, the journal began to receive unsolicited research papers, which were sent out for peer review. Chronic illness emerged as an important focus of the journal. Papers in the area of hyperactivity were also common. In general, most papers came from authors in academic settings.

Dr. Routh's terms were also times of financial instability for *JPP*. Archival materials reflect this crisis time clearly and indicate increased costs related to its increase in size from 30–60 pages/year and increased charges for printing. In a March 21, 1977 letter from Larry M. Raskin (Secretary/Treasurer of SPP) to Dr. Willis, Dr. Raskin wrote: "I am very concerned that we will not have enough money to publish the journal for the rest of the year. What are we going to do about it?" Dr. Willis's handwritten response back was revealing, and direct: "Pray!" In

1978, the SPP board asked that Dr. Routh reduce the number of issues per year to three, to save money. People, including Dr. Raskin, donated personal funds to help the journal. Effective steps began to hold down publication costs (SPP Executive Committee minutes, 2/10/77).

Despite these substantial economic strains, *JPP* thrived and grew during the transition from Dr. Willis to Dr. Routh, and subsequently during his term. In 1976 the Publications and Communications Board of the American Psychological Association recommended to the APA Council that the SPP publish the journal, reflecting recognition and approval within the formal APA structure, as a divisional journal of Division 12 (Willis, 1977). That same year, the first international subscriptions were received (Willis, 1977). Minutes of the SPP Executive Committee meetings show that overall submissions (including invited papers) were about 100 papers per year. The acceptance rate in 1977 was 33% and in 1981, 37%.

Gerald Koocher, at Children's Hospital in Boston became Editor in 1983 and asked Michael Roberts from the University of Alabama to be Associate Editor. Dr. Koocher received his PhD in 1972 from the University of Missouri and interned at Boston Children's Hospital. His research was established in



Allan Barclay, Ph.D.

the area of coping with life-threatening and terminal illness, ethics, and adherence. The contract with Plenum was renegotiated and successful, with *JPP* making a significant profit for the SPP treasury and demonstrating an increase in institutional subscriptions. *JPP* received a solid 100 submissions per year and the inclusion of nonpsychologists on the Editorial Board reflected the increasing breadth of its scope.

This period was characterized by a broad range in the types of papers submitted (e.g. case reports, presidential addresses, empirical reports) and the topics addressed. Chronic illness was a prevalent theme and special issues were featured. In general, a crossover of submissions related to clinical child and pediatric psychology was seen. The journal became somewhat more highly selective of papers, with a 1982 acceptance rate of 29%. Over the first 10 years of publication, there was a (statistically significant) decline in the number of literature reviews and articles on professional practice and an increase in the publication of basic and applied research papers (Elkins & Roberts, 1988).

The next editor was Michael Roberts, whose term spanned 1988 to 1992. Dr. Roberts moved during his term from the University of Alabama to the University of Kansas. Dr. Roberts received his PhD from Purdue University and completed his internship at the Oklahoma Health Sciences Center. His primary interests include prevention, public policy, and professional issues. Associate Editors serving with Dr. Roberts were Annette La Greca, PhD, University of Miami (Psychology); Dennis Harper, PhD, University of Iowa (Pediatrics); and Jan Wallander, PhD, at the University of Alabama-Birmingham (Civitan International Research Center).

Dr. Roberts's term was one of steady growth for *JPP*. The journal published 800 pages per year and increased from 4 to 6 issues/volume. The number of submissions increased (ranging from 91 to 148) and the royalties from the publishing contract with Plenum assured the journal's financial stability and growth. Two books were published based on *JPP* papers. Upon his selection as Editor, Dr. Roberts appointed a committee to write a new masthead for the journal that reflected the broader scope of the field and the scientific domains reflected (Roberts, 1992). During the late 1980s and early 1990s increased research funding promoted more empirical research (56.6% of papers during Dr. Roberts' term acknowledged grant support) and a growth in submissions from Departments of Psychology

(as opposed to psychologists in medical schools). The acceptance rate during this period documented the increasing selectivity of the journal (26.6% of papers were accepted) and the publication lag was 7 months. Papers reflect the correlational and explicative focus of research prevalent during that time (Roberts, McNeal, Randall, & Roberts, 1996). Chronic illness remained the single most predominant area of work. Greater differentiation of clinical child and pediatric psychology was also seen.

Annette La Greca of the University of Miami served as Editor from 1993 to 1997. Dr. La Greca received her PhD at Purdue University and completed her internship at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Her primary areas of expertise include diabetes, treatment adherence, peers and social relationships, and trauma. Dr. La Greca reappointed Dr. Wallander as Associate Editor and asked Dennis Drotar, PhD (Case Western Reserve) and Kathleen Lemanek, PhD (University of Kansas) to join as Associate Editors. In 1995, Anne E. Kazak, PhD, from The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia joined the Associate Editor team.

During Dr. La Greca's term, the layout of the journal shifted (as it had previously with a change in editors) to a slightly different shade of blue, with a more contemporary font and page layout. Two special issues were published each year, one edited by an associate editor and one by a guest editor. Dr. La Greca invited articles on special themes and grouped articles into special sections, with invited commentaries. The size of the journal continued to increase, in terms of numbers of pages and number of submissions. During the mid 1990s there was an increase in articles related to HIV infection and AIDS, reflecting changes in the prognosis and chronicity of these conditions. Chronic illness remained the most frequent topic area for submissions. The types of papers shifted in the direction of more explanatory rather than descriptive papers and more longitudinal papers. Fewer papers were published that related to professional practice and more attention was given to nonintentional injuries.

Over these years, the number of submissions grew, generally in the range of 130–160 per year. At the same time, the editorial lag (time from the receipt of a paper to an editorial decision) was maintained at 6–7 weeks. The publication lag (time from acceptance of a paper to when it is published) ranged from 6–9 months. The acceptance rate re-

flected the highly competitive nature of the journal, in the range of 16%–18% (American Psychological Association Committee on Publications and Communications, 1996).

The current editor, Anne E. Kazak, Director of the Department of Psychology at The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, is Editor from 1998 to 2002. Dr. Kazak received her PhD from the University of Virginia and completed internship training at Yale University in the Department of Psychiatry. Her areas of specialty include pediatric oncology, family research, interventions, and pain and trauma. Dr. Kazak assembled a team of five associate editors. Dr. Lemanek (who subsequently moved to Columbus Children's Hospital in Ohio) remained as an Associate Editor. An associate editor outside of the United States, Christine Eiser, PhD, at the University of Exeter, United Kingdom, helped cement the journal's international outreach efforts. Anthony Spirito, PhD, from Brown University (Psychiatry), Jack Finney, PhD, from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Psychology), and Robert Thompson, PhD, from Duke University (Medical Psychology) completed the team of Associate Editors.

At this juncture, *JPP*'s contract with Plenum was expiring and a new publisher was chosen, Oxford University Press. The Executive Committee of the SPP articulated the importance of broad and effective marketing strategies (to nonpsychologists and internationally) and technology (e.g., internet publishing of the journal) in decision-making about the choice of publisher. With a now established track record as a scientifically and fiscally sound publication, the society was able to negotiate a contract that would provide increased support for the editors and editorial office while assuring a solid stream of revenue for the SPP.

A new format for the journal was also selected (increasing the journal's size from the previous 6" by 9" to 8.5" by 11"). The cover and inside layout were changed, while maintaining the blue/teal color but with a different layout. The larger page allowed for more flexibility in layout for articles, and a structured abstract was used. The larger size was also seen as advantageous in making *JPP* look more like other medical journals, with the full page size. More physicians were selected for the editorial board. In 2000, publication was expanded to 8 issues/year. Also in 2000, the full-text of the journal was available online (www.highwire.stanford.edu).

Current emphases within the journal include the publication of articles related to the outcomes

of pediatric psychology interventions. Chronic illness remains the staple with respect to content area. However, special issues complement efforts to expand the scope of publications (e.g., Pediatric Primary Care, Methodology, International Issues, Empirically Supported Treatments). In general, the journal has remained stable and very similar to Dr. La Greca's term in the number of submissions per year and the editorial lag (median 7 weeks) and publication lag (median, 7–8 months). The acceptance rate remains in the range of 19%–22% of papers annually (American Psychological Association Committee on Publications and Communications, 1998).

Has the Journal of Pediatric Psychology Achieved "Maturity?"

In response to the question posed to the former editors regarding how to judge the maturity of a journal, the following ideas emerged.

One important yardstick is an essentially linear measure of growth: that is, the number of submissions, the number of papers published, the numbers of issues/pages published annually, and the quantity of individual and institutional subscriptions. With regard to these outcomes, it appears that the journal has reached maturity. *JPP* has grown consistently in all of these indicators. There is some evidence that its growth has stabilized (e.g., the number of submissions and subscriptions has been stable for quite a while), raising the question of whether, in terms of numbers, the journal is now reaching the majority of potential contributors and subscribers, or whether more attention should be paid to more development in these areas.

Objective indicators of the impact of a journal, as measured by the number of citations made of published articles, are other indicators of a journal's stature in the field. Most notably, the Social Science Citation Index publishes annual impact factors, derived from the number of times a journal is cited for papers in the preceding two years. For example, *JPP*'s 1998 impact factor is 1.026, reflecting citation frequency for 1998 papers that cite *JPP* papers in 1996 and 1997. Related to the impact factor is the rank. For 1998, *JPP* ranked 18/48 of the journals in the field of developmental psychology.

Other, more qualitative, indicators are more difficult to document and evaluate. For example, understanding who submits to the journal (and the

quality of what they submit) reflects the prestige of the journal. As the flagship journal in the field of pediatric psychology, it is reasonable to expect that leading figures in the field would submit their best work to *JPP*. Although objective data on this are very difficult to extract, it appears that *JPP* has achieved this goal. Most papers received today appear to be coming to *JPP* as a first outlet. The editorial team receives more papers of quality than can be published. The majority of submissions are evaluated as good contributions, but not all can be accommodated. Careful attention to the editorial board membership throughout the history of the journal has also likely contributed to the recognition of prominent pediatric psychologists affiliated with the journal. In general, based on informal feedback from authors, the journal appears to have a reputation of providing thoughtful and constructive reviews, with very few reviews eliciting complaints from authors. The Editorial Board has clearly contributed enormously to maintaining the integrity of the journal.

Perhaps more difficult than documenting this brief history of the journal is trying to step outside the field of pediatric psychology to discern how broader issues have affected *JPP*. For example, it appears that the number of journals in psychology (and in medicine and the social sciences generally) has increased over the past 20 years. In this sense, the journal has likely survived several potential challenges to it, in the form of competition for submissions from other journals. Alternatively, the growth in the number of journals reflects the accelerated growth of research generally and has promoted the amount and quality of knowledge available. One question pertaining to the current rapid rate of change (and uncertainty) in health care is how the journal can balance commitment to the science and practice of pediatric psychology while also reflecting challenges and solutions for the many external demands.

Routh and Mesibov (1979) published data regarding the journals most frequently cited in *JPP*, Volumes 1–3 (1976–1978). He selected journals cited a minimum of 20 times over the 12 issues published in these 3 years and provided a rank ordering. He extracted 23 journals that met these criteria, with the top ten presented in Table 1. Routh concludes, “our authors . . . are at home in the pediatric and general medical literature. They are knowledgeable about psychiatry and neurology. . . . [T]hey find most useful the literatures on child develop-

Table 1. Number of Citations and Ranking for the Top Ten Most Frequently Cited Journals in 12 Issues of the *Journal of Pediatric Psychology*: Volumes 1 to 3 (1976–78, combined) and Volumes 23–24 (1997–98, combined)

Journal	1976–78 ^a		1997–98	
	Citations	Rank	Citations	Rank
<i>Journal of Pediatric Psychology</i> ^b	—	—	250	1
<i>Pediatrics</i>	90	1	121	2
<i>Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology</i>	31	10	96	3
<i>Journal of Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics</i> ^c	—	—	64	4
<i>Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry</i>	31	10	64	4
<i>Child Development</i>	75	2	49	5
<i>Headache</i> ^d	—	—	43	6
<i>Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry</i> ^e	—	—	38	7
<i>Journal of Pediatrics</i>	49	6	36	8
<i>Journal of Clinical Child Psychology</i> ^f	—	—	34	9
<i>Journal of Personality and Social Psychology</i> ^g	—	—	33	10

Several journals listed in Routh's (1978) 1–10 ranking are still cited, but with lower frequency. These are (with number of 1976–78 and 1997–98 citations in parentheses): *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* (59, 8); *American Journal of Psychiatry* (56, 9); *Developmental Medicine and Child Neurology* (35, 20); *Archives of General Psychiatry* (42, 20); and *Behavior Research and Therapy* (31, 4). The *Journal of Autism and Childhood Schizophrenia (Developmental Disabilities)* was the third most frequently cited journal in 1976–78. It was not cited in 1997–98.

^aData from Routh (1978).

^b*Journal of Pediatric Psychology* was not included in 1976–78 calculations.

^c*Journal of Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics* was first published in 1980.

^d*Headache* and *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* were not cited 20 or more times in 1976–78 in *JPP*.

^e*Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry* and *Journal of Clinical Child Psychology* were ranked 23 and 19, respectively, in 1976–78.

ment, clinical psychology and behavioral approaches to treatment. They have a strong interest in developmental disabilities, such as mental retardation and autism” (Routh & Mesibov, 1979, p. 2).

To provide a profile of journals that publish work related to ours, similar calculations are provided for 1997–1998 (Table 1). This recent “top ten” includes highly competitive and respected journals from pediatrics, psychology, and psychiatry. It is also interesting to see a more focused medical journal (*Headache*) high on the list. One striking difference from the earlier tally is that *JPP* is overwhelmingly the most frequently cited journal in our pages. This may reflect a two-fold possibility. First, *JPP* is the leading source for empirical publica-

tions in this field. And, second, our authors tend to read and cite the same authors and journals, raising the question of whether we have limited our exposure to other ideas and outlets. However, the overall breadth of journals cited is high, over 200 for each of these years. Multiple subspecialty journals are widely cited, as are outlets from other disciplines and representing the vast majority of subspecialties of psychology related to both science and practice. Overall, Routh's comments about *JPP* authors seem as applicable now as they were in the 1970s. Also readily apparent is the aforementioned growth in the number of journals nationally and internationally.

Conclusions

Parents hope for the time when offspring are financially independent yet remain connected to the home and to parental values and committed to maintaining a warm connectedness over time. It is very evident from reviewing minutes and correspondence that the SPP has consistently main-

tained excellent parenting responsibilities for *JPP*. Many individuals associated with the SPP board extended themselves, both personally and financially, to ease the journal through difficult growth pains. There is also little sense of overt conflict in the materials, indicating a close-knit group devoted to a common mission in fostering the journal. The overall sense is of the evolution of a novel and viable field, rather than a revolutionary break with existing practice. Although there were undoubtedly conflicts (as in any family or organization), the overriding cohesion and commitment appear to remain a true characterization of the journal and SPP over time. It also seems to have fueled the journal's success and helped to assure a balance of attention to themes over time.

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