

Editorial: The *Journal of Pediatric Psychology*—The Next Five Years

Grayson N. Holmbeck, PhD

Department of Psychology, Loyola University Chicago

All correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Grayson N. Holmbeck, PhD, Department of Psychology, Loyola University Chicago, 1032 W. Sheridan Road, Chicago, IL 60660, USA.

E-mail: gholmbe@luc.edu

Received November 5, 2012; revisions received and accepted November 5, 2012

I am delighted to be the new Editor of the *Journal of Pediatric Psychology (JPP)*! Because of the work of so many superb former editors, we begin 2013 with a healthy and vibrant journal, with so much to look forward to in the coming years. I am particularly grateful to Dennis Drotar and his editorial team for handing over a journal that has a high rate of submissions, a competitive rejection rate, and an excellent “time to first editorial decision.” I hope to continue to maintain this level of quality, while continuing to publish methodologically strong research articles. I am also pleased that the following individuals have agreed to be Associate Editors for the journal: Dean Beebe, John Lavigne, Tonya Palermo, Lori Stark, Ric Steele, and Tim Wyszocki. We have already been working together as a team for a year (we began reviewing all newly submitted papers in January 2012), and I am delighted to have all of them on board. Also, I am particularly fortunate that Susan Wood has agreed to continue to serve as the Editorial Assistant for the journal.

As any developmentally oriented scholar knows, healthy development consists of continuity and change. Applying these concepts to *JPP*, I seek to retain the strong tradition that *JPP* has established by continuing to highlight the best research in our field, including first-rate systematic reviews of such research (see new initiative in this area later in the text). In the context of such continuity, I also seek to help *JPP* grow in new directions, increasing its appeal and usefulness to the readership as well as its impact on the larger field of pediatric psychology.

In this editorial, I provide my goal-oriented 5-year plan for *JPP*. I hope that when I write my closing editorial at the end of 2017, we will have accomplished these goals.

Goal 1: Publish on Topical, Innovative, and Contemporary Issues in Pediatric Psychology

JPP has a long history of supporting special issues and sections on topics of interest to the readership. These issues and sections typically have articles that are widely cited and that also promote innovative research and new types of submissions for our journal. With the help of our Associate Editors, I developed a time line for these special issues, with two such issues scheduled for each year. Near the end of 2012, we had deadlines for two special issues, one that will focus on intervention and prevention programs for obesity and overweight (edited by Ric Steele and David Janicke) and another that focuses on adherence in youth with chronic conditions, with a particular focus on interventions (edited by Lori Stark). We continue in 2013 with a special issue on evidence-based treatments in pediatric psychology (edited by Tonya Palermo; a follow-up to the series published in *JPP* in 1999) and a special issue on statistical applications in pediatric psychology (edited by Bryan Karaszia and Kris Berlin). It is exciting that most of our initial special issues will focus on intervention-related research, which is in line with recommendations of previous editors of *JPP* (e.g., La Greca, 1997; Kazak, 2002; Brown, 2007; Drotar, 2012). Potential topics of other future special issues include psychological aspects of pediatric primary care, pediatric health care disparities, direct observational methods, peer relations in youth with chronic conditions, pediatric conditions and school functioning, applications of telecommunications technology in pediatric assessment and intervention, and adjustment to trauma. We welcome suggestions for future special issues and sections.

We have also developed a specific strategy for increasing the quality, scope, and impact of review articles published in *JPP*. Beginning in 2013, two types of review articles will be accepted for submission: (1) systematic reviews (rigorous high-quality comprehensive reviews); and (2) topical reviews (brief articles that summarize recent findings and highlight contemporary issues in pediatric psychology). Information and detailed instructions for these reviews are provided in an editorial in this issue by Tonya Palermo.

I am also pleased to report that our Society of Pediatric Psychology (SPP) Historian, Michael Roberts, and I have jump-started the “Pioneers in Pediatric Psychology” series beginning with this issue of *JPP*. Many of you may recall that, in 2000–2002, articles were published by the following “pioneers” who made significant contributions to the field of pediatric psychology and the SPP: Don Routh, Gary Messibov, Gene Walker, and Denny Drotar. We are asking authors to discuss “lessons learned” from their experiences in the field and how some of their experiences were interwoven with historical developments in the field. We also ask them to share their wisdom by providing insights that may be particularly beneficial to early career professionals and those currently in training.

Goal 2: Support a Developmental Perspective on Research Submitted to *JPP*

As I have noted previously in this journal (Holmbeck, 2002; Holmbeck, Bruno, & Jandasek, 2006), health and illness occur within a changing, unfolding developmental context. As such, the quality of research on youth with chronic conditions is likely to be “bumped up” a level if a developmental perspective is adopted by researchers. It is critical that we study constructs that are developmentally relevant to the age-groups under investigation. Indeed, it is of interest to know more about how the normative tasks of each developmental period are modified by the presence of a chronic physical condition. Given that chronic conditions can change over time in individuals who are also changing and maturing over time, it is particularly advantageous for researchers to use longitudinally oriented statistical strategies and methodologies.

We strongly encourage that such longitudinal developmentally oriented research be submitted to *JPP*. In particular, we need more longitudinal work that focuses on development during early childhood and the important transitions to early adolescence and emerging adulthood. Moreover, we need more developmentally oriented work that focuses on the transition to adult health care in

youth who have “grown up” in child-oriented medical facilities.

Goal 3: Streamline the Review Process and the Editorial Board and Improve the Quality of Reviews

We have simplified the structure of our editorial board. Previously, *JPP* had a Reviewer Panel that included reviewers who were new to the editorial process or to *JPP*. The goal of this initiative was to promote some of these new reviewers to the Editorial Board after they had additional experience as a reviewer for *JPP*. In the end, many of the reviewers serving on the Reviewer Panel proved to function comparably to an Editorial Board member in both the quantity and quality of their reviews and have, therefore, been promoted to the Editorial Board. Although we will no longer have a Reviewer Panel, we are supporting the junior reviewer mentoring program (see Goal 6 below).

Previously, each Associate Editor functioned as a special series editor for various important topic areas, and these were listed on the masthead next to the name of each Associate Editor. Although targeting these topics focused attention on several key areas in need of further empirical work, I was concerned that this practice would be confusing to those who sought to submit papers to *JPP* for the first time. Also, by listing special series topic areas on our masthead, it may have appeared that these were the only topics that we support. Thus, this practice has been discontinued.

Based on feedback at open meetings with reviewers and authors, it became clear that authors who are given the opportunity to revise and resubmit a manuscript submitted to *JPP* are often overwhelmed by lengthy review comments and a large number of reviews. Thus, we added new reviewer instructions where we ask each reviewer to focus on major issues, rather than minor details, and to submit reviews no longer than two pages. I also asked the Associate Editors to send papers out for review to no more than three reviewers. Finally, all reviewers will get copies of editors’ decision letters and copies of all other reviews. To streamline the revision process, authors will be given 2 months to complete their first revision and 1 month for all subsequent revisions.

Goal 4: Provide a New Look to the Journal Website and the Journal Table of Contents

We seek to simplify the structure of our Table of Contents. In the past, the Editor divided articles into various

categories within the Table of Contents (e.g., adherence, psychosocial adjustment). I was concerned that readers would be less likely to peruse all articles in an issue when such a practice was in place. Thus, we will include special series papers, commentaries, and literature reviews at the beginning of each issue, followed by a “Regular Articles” section. We hope that all readers will examine all titles in each Table of Contents. Finally, with the help of Tonya Palermo, we streamlined (i.e., shortened) and clarified the author instructions on our journal website.

Goal 5: Publish Papers From American Psychological Association Convention Award Winners

With the support of the SPP Board, we will begin publishing papers written by winners of the following SPP awards (beginning with those awarded in 2012): (1) the Donald K. Routh Early Career Award; (2) the Martin P. Levin Distinguished Mentoring Award; (3) the Logan Wright Distinguished Research Award; and (4) the Lee Salk Distinguished Service Award. Typically, winners of these awards present papers at the annual American Psychological Association (APA) convention, but these presentations are often only heard by a minority of our membership. Thus, this new initiative will bring the comments of these award winners to a broader readership. By beginning this initiative, we followed the lead of the APA, which annually publishes award papers in the *American Psychologist*. It became clear to us that these papers serve an important historical and archival function for the larger organization.

Goal 6: Support and Enhance the Junior Reviewer Mentoring Program

As has been done in the past, we will continue to support the junior reviewer mentoring program. In fact, Tonya Palermo and I revised and simplified the description of this program, and we placed this description in the author instructions section of our journal website. We also advertised this program on the Division 54 listserv in Fall 2012. This program is critical to the continuity and development of our field. By mentoring junior reviewers, we are creating the next generation of first-rate reviewers, thus ensuring that our high-quality review process will continue.

Goal 7: Support Improvements in the Quality of Research on New Assessment Methods

In 2009, Katie Devine and I wrote an editorial that included an author’s checklist for measure development

and validation manuscripts (Holmbeck & Devine, 2009). The journal receives numerous assessment-oriented manuscripts; indeed, measure development is often a first step that leads to future research advances. During the next 5 years, we would like to increase the quantity and quality of assessment-oriented manuscripts that are submitted to *JPP*, particularly those that maintain high psychometric standards (see Holmbeck & Devine 2009). When submitting such manuscripts to *JPP*, we suggest that authors emphasize how their measure relates to pediatric or physical health conditions in childhood and adolescence, how the measure will be useful to the readership of the journal, and how the measure will advance the field.

Goal 8: Support Improvement in the Quality of Research Methods and Statistical Analyses

In 2002, Robert Noll edited a special issue of *JPP* on methodology and design (Noll, 2002). We would like to echo Noll’s call for improved designs and statistical methods in our field by challenging authors to achieve the highest standards for their work. We highly recommend that everyone re-read the articles in this important special issue. We would also like to remind authors and readers that *JPP* requires the use of CONSORT (Consolidated Standards of Reporting Trials; <http://www.consort-statement.org/>) and TREND (Transparent Reporting of Evaluations with Nonrandomized Designs; <http://www.cdc.gov/trendstatement/>) criteria when publishing evaluations of randomized (CONSORT) and nonrandomized (TREND) clinical trials.

Goal 9: Enhance the Impact Factor of the Journal

Although the impact factor for *JPP* hovered between 1.50 and 2.00 in the early part of the past decade (2001–2005; Brown, 2007), it rose to >3.0 in 2006 and has remained close to 3.0 ever since. It is important to note that the impact factor is not a current indicator of citation rates. For example, the 2011 impact factor is reported in 2012 but is based on citation rates in 2009–2010. Basically, the impact factor is the 2-year citation rate for all articles in the journal, excluding editorials and other nonempirical or nonreview articles. We will work closely with David Crotty at Oxford University Press to monitor our impact factor and the types of articles that are most frequently cited by and of most interest to our readership.

Goal 10: Work Closely and Collaboratively With the Editors of SPP's New Journal: *Clinical Practice in Pediatric Psychology*

We are delighted to report that SPP now supports two journals. Specifically, in Spring 2013, the first issue of *Clinical Practice in Pediatric Psychology* will appear under the leadership of co-editors Jennifer Shroff Pendley and W. Douglas Tynan. Such an important event in the life of SPP brings with it opportunities for growth and collaboration across our two journals. Thus, in the most recent issue of Progress Notes, we discussed how potential authors can determine to which journal they should submit their work. Because there will be unavoidable overlap between the two journals, the editors will work closely with authors to find the most appropriate outlet for their work.

Goal 11: Enhance Coordination Between JPP and the SPP Website

We have an opportunity to enhance the impact of articles in *JPP* by including content from specific articles on our website. In keeping with this goal, we recently asked authors of articles that appeared in a recent *JPP* special issue on assessment (Cohen et al., 2008) to develop web pages that summarize the findings of their reviews. These web pages are now included on the SPP website in a new Evidence-based Practice library that was developed by the SPP Committee on Science and Practice. We are planning to do the same with the articles that are published as part of the special issue on evidence-based interventions that is currently being edited by Tonya Palermo (a similar strategy has been used by Division 53, Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology). Finally, with respect to the website, we encourage authors who have had papers accepted in *JPP* to include additional tables or other material (including data or additional findings) as supplementary materials on the website.

Goal 12: Enhance Communication With Members of SPP

Although the editors and Editorial Board will work tirelessly to maintain the high quality of *JPP*, this is *your* journal. We want this journal to meet your needs, while we publish the best and most clinically relevant research

possible. If you do not like something we are doing, please tell us! (You may contact me at: gholmbe@luc.edu.) Better yet, if you have an idea for something new, let us know your thoughts.

Acknowledgments

The author thanks Dean Beebe, John Lavigne, Tonya Palermo, Lori Stark, Ric Steele, and Tim Wysocki for comments on an earlier version of this editorial.

Conflicts of interest: None declared.

References

- Brown, R. T. (2007). *Journal of Pediatric Psychology (JPP)*, 2003-2007: Editor's *vale dictum*. *Journal of Pediatric Psychology*, 32, 1165–1178.
- Cohen, L. L., La Greca, A. M., Blount, R. L., Kazak, A. E., Holmbeck, G. N., & Lemanek, K. L. (2008). Introduction to special issue: Evidence-based assessment in pediatric psychology. *Journal of Pediatric Psychology*, 33, 911–915.
- Drotar, D. (2012). *Journal of Pediatric Psychology (JPP)*, 1998-2002: Editor's *vale dictum*. *Journal of Pediatric Psychology*, 37, 1051–1064.
- Holmbeck, G. N. (2002). A developmental perspective on adolescent health and illness: An introduction to the special issues. *Journal of Pediatric Psychology*, 27, 409–416.
- Holmbeck, G. N., Bruno, E. F., & Jandasek, B. (2006). Longitudinal research in pediatric psychology: An introduction to the special issue. *Journal of Pediatric Psychology*, 31, 995–1001.
- Holmbeck, G. N., & Devine, K. A. (2009). Editorial: An author's checklist for measure development and validation manuscripts. *Journal of Pediatric Psychology*, 34, 691–696.
- Kazak, A. E. (2002). *Journal of Pediatric Psychology (JPP)*, 1998-2002: Editor's *vale dictum*. *Journal of Pediatric Psychology*, 27, 653–663.
- La Greca, A. M. (1997). Reflections and perspectives on pediatric psychology: Editor's *vale dictum*. *Journal of Pediatric Psychology*, 22, 759–770.
- Noll, R. B. (2002). How to build a better mousetrap: Introduction to the special issue on methodology and design. *Journal of Pediatric Psychology*, 27, 1–3.