

# A year of big changes at CANDJ

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The year 2025 will be an exciting one for the *CAND Journal*. We have updated the tech platforms in our virtual head office(s) and have been working with our publishing team at SG on a comprehensive journal guideline review and update, which will be completed later this spring. We will also be creating a journal fact sheet—a concise version of what we do—for people who might be new to the idea of a naturopathic professional journal, or who are curious about submitting but would like an overview of how things work. We are also working on developing policies around the use of artificial intelligence (AI) programs such as ChatGPT to generate content, an issue which is proving to be an ethical challenge across the spectrum of medical publishing (all publishing, in fact), not just for us.<sup>1</sup>

We also have two big project announcements for this year: first is that *CANDJ* will be moving from subscription-based to open access format to coincide with our Cancer Care Special Edition in June. We are doing this now, as we believe we are at a point in our evolution where the quality of the work at the *CAND Journal* really speaks for itself; we have a growing global audience, and we are now looking to create impact and readership within the larger healthcare community, as well as among healthcare stakeholders and the general public. After close to 4 years on our digital platform, we have a strong editorial and production team, including a growing body of subject matter experts providing vigorous peer review for all research submissions. We stand by the quality of our content and believe it's a great time to let everyone else know about it as well. There will be further updates on what open access at the *CAND Journal* means for readers, contributors, and the profession as a whole as we get closer to our launch date in June.

Our second major project is our long-awaited application to PubMed Central (PMC). This has been years in the planning stages, but the editorial and publication teams feel we are now ready to make our application to this highly competitive database of the US National Institutes of Health's National Library of Medicine (NIH/NLM). Currently, we are already indexed on CrossRef and EBSCOhost. However, being on PubMed would open up our content to larger audiences in a way that we could

not possibly manage, even with the most effective search engine optimization (SEO), and would give our research the possibility of being read and cited well beyond our core readership. It would also demonstrate the quality and credibility of the *CAND Journal* and the content we publish and increase the impact of the work our researchers and clinicians do to support this publication for the CAND.

Applying to PubMed is a multi-step process that involves an initial application screening, scientific quality review, and technical evaluation, and can take 6 to 12 months to complete. We plan to start after we finish our guideline updates and open access transition (May/June 2025), and we will keep our readers updated as we progress.

This edition's offerings lead off with two commentaries, one from the Ontario Association of Naturopathic Doctors' (OAND) Government Relations Director, Kevin Draper, who discusses some of the progress and challenges over the past year as they seek to expand naturopathic scope on prescriptions and diagnostic tests. As Ontario is the largest of our regulated provinces, progress here will hopefully translate into breakthroughs in other provinces, but as he points out, advocating for NDs among decision-makers within the various health ministries, as well as the provincial regulators, requires strong communication skills, as well as the development of relationships with political stakeholders and allied professional associations. Sometimes there are clear breakthroughs, but often these come at the culmination of many years of hard work by Association volunteers and staff. At the same time, working with regulators is subject to the same ebb and flow as advocacy and bi-directional communication.

Our second commentary is a first-person narrative by Dass on her experience as a BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and people of colour) ND and a member of the Naturopathic Doctors' Dismantling Racism group. As one of an emerging generation of voices in the profession, she challenges colleagues to consider that a lack of diversity in ND graduates from our training programs in Canada can lead to BIPOC colleagues feeling "othered" in our professional spaces. She goes on to discuss what we can and should

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do—in leadership and the profession at large—to make everyone feel included.

As a preview of our Cancer Care Special Edition coming later this spring, we have a submission from Rizzolo et al. that discusses the results of a recent survey of practicing North American NDs to determine the extent of cancer care provided by NDs, as well as identify knowledge gaps that can be addressed with professional clinical resources. There is currently a move in the profession towards creating more independent professional development; at the *CAND Journal* we see published surveys like this as a crucial step in identifying where to direct appropriate clinical resource development, away from an over-reliance on events directly developed by industry.

We also have two case reports for this edition, one from a British Columbia-based team on regenerative injection therapy (prolotherapy and platelet-rich plasma [PRP]) for chronic severe low back pain, and a second on a constitutional homeopathy treatment of rumination syndrome in a 6-year-old. While homeopathy has been a part of classical naturopathy for many years, the use of prolotherapy and PRP is relatively recent and is currently limited to NDs practicing in British Columbia, partially due to Health Canada defining plasma as a scheduled substance (drug) in 2019. Those colleagues who use this therapy often report positive outcomes; however, to date, there are few published trials in

the rehabilitation literature, particularly on PRP. We hope this case report will encourage these colleagues to generate more reports and eventually safety and efficacy trials on these therapies to fill the gaps.

While we are working on these important changes to the *CAND Journal* website, guidelines, and platform, we hope you enjoy this edition and, as always, encourage feedback and letters to my new email address at editor@cand.ca.

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#### CONFLICTS OF INTEREST DISCLOSURE

I have read and understood the *CAND Journal's* policy on conflicts of interest and declare that I have none.

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#### REFERENCES

1. Liebrez M, Shleifer R, Buadze A, Bhugra D, Smith A. Generating scholarly content with ChatGPT: ethical challenges for medical publishing. *Lancet Digit Health*. 2023 Mar;5(3):e105-e106. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2589-7500\(23\)00019-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2589-7500(23)00019-5).