

History and Evolution of the *Vital Link* Journal

Mark Fontes, ND, and Shawn O'Reilly



The history and evolution of the *Vital Link* mirrors, to a large degree, the growth of naturopathic medicine in Canada. The *Vital Link* has been published by the Canadian Association of Naturopathic Doctors (CAND) (then the Canadian Naturopathic Association, CNA) since 1992, when practising naturopathic doctors (NDs) in the country numbered around 500. Between 1992 and 2008, as the profession grew to over 1,000 NDs, the *Vital Link* was published as a newsletter for CAND members and included professional updates, CAND-related news, and general articles written by NDs. In 2008, the decision was made to establish the *Vital Link* as a peer-review-style journal featuring scholarly articles about naturopathic medicine. Its layout was updated to reflect this new direction. The following year, an editorial/review board was established. In 2011, with over 1,500 NDs in practice, the journal underwent a substantial revision focusing on the cause of disease, with each edition providing an in-depth review of one topic. The layout, masthead, and graphics were completely redesigned. Since that time, the *Vital Link* has only contained research-based articles that have undergone peer review alongside a CAND Update. It is important to note that with the exception of an outside printer, all the work required to publish the *Vital Link* was done in house and by a dedicated group of NDs volunteering their time as editors, authors, and reviewers.

Since its inception, the *Vital Link* journal's objectives have been to increase professional and public exposure to its articles, create a more prominent profile for naturopathic doctors and, in the long term, to become indexed in Alternative Medicine and Conventional Medicine databases. With NDs in Canada now numbering over 3,000 and with the launch of the *CANDJ*, we are proud to say that we can now put a tick mark beside that final objective.

The *CANDJ* serves as an important resource for the naturopathic profession to provide research updates on best patient care practices and evidence-informed treatments. We look forward to growing the research base of the naturopathic profession and engaging in conversations with our colleagues and allied health professionals.

We would like to thank everyone who has been involved in making this important transition a reality: Dr. Marianne Trevorrow, ND (Editor in Chief), Dr. Cyndi Gilbert, ND (Associate Editor), and Jill Torigian and her team at SG Publishing. On behalf of the naturopathic profession, thank you for your time and commitment to producing a high-quality and valuable online journal.

Dr. Mark Fontes, ND, is Chair of the Canadian Association of Naturopathic Doctors.

Shawn O'Reilly is Executive Director and Director of Government Relations of the Canadian Association of Naturopathic Doctors.