Sleep Health transitions during a vulnerable time

I was 8 months pregnant in the Fall of 2014 when I assumed the role of the first Editor-in-Chief of the National Sleep Foundation’s new journal, Sleep Health. We had a vision—we needed to execute it. For the first few months, we scrambled, we networked, we built teams. I made endless phone calls, texts, and emails from the maternity ward, holding my newborn. And in my vulnerable sleep-deprived post-partum months, we assembled 50 well-respected international and multidisciplinary members of our sleep research community to form our initial Editorial Board. We identified an Ombudsman (Tom Roth, PhD, Henry Ford Health System) and an Art Editor (Meir Kryger, MD, Yale University), two distinctive features of our Journal. We sought out excellent submissions for our first issues and invited reviewers, while spreading the word about the birth of this new publication.

Together we succeeded in creating a sleep journal with a public health focus, filling a gap in the academic sleep research publishing landscape. The scope of the Journal includes (1) environmental, social, and behavioral determinants of sleep health; (2) cognitive, physical, and psychological health outcomes of sleep health; and (3) policy and intervention research related to sleep. As a testament to our success, the Association of American Publishers awarded Sleep Health the Best New Journal PROSE Award in 2016 in the category of Science Technology and Medicine. We were off to a strong start.

Over the years, we continued to grow. We started with four issues per year, and in our third year moved to six issues per year, with increases in both number of submissions and selectivity. We currently accept around 30% of all submissions and are highly cited, with an Elsevier CiteScore of 3.44, ranking in fourth place among sleep journals (https://www.scopus.com/sources, as of April 10, 2020). We expect to receive a Clarivate Impact Factor in 2021.

Our team of Associate Editors has expanded as well. We went from our initial four Associate Editors (Orfeu Buxton, PhD, Pennsylvania State University; Michael Grandner, PhD, University of Arizona; Wendy Troxel, PhD, RAND Corporation; and Amy Wolfson, PhD, Loyola University), to 6 Associate Editors (adding Reut Gruber, PhD, McGill University, and Aric Prather, PhD, University of California, San Francisco), to 10 Associate Editors (with the addition of Mathias Basner, MD, PhD, MSc, University of Pennsylvania; Kelly Baron, PhD, MPH, University of Utah; Julio Fernandez-Mendoza, PhD, Pennsylvania State University; Michelle Garrison, University of Washington; and Sanjay Patel, MD, University of Pittsburgh). Each Associate Editor plays a key role in the success of the Journal’s fair and thorough review process, and I am extremely grateful for their assistance, insight, and camaraderie.

Now, as I complete my six years as Editor-in-Chief, the Journal transitions to another stage. I have the utmost confidence in the leadership and capabilities of Editor-in-Chief (Designate) Orfeu Buxton, who assumes the role with the next issue. Dr. Buxton is a close colleague and friend who offers a broad vision, along with meticulous attention to detail. He brings new voices and members of the Sleep Health community to leadership roles. He has expanded the Associate Editorial Board to include Suzanne Bertisch, MD, Harvard Medical School; Michelle Garrison, PhD, University of Washington; Freda Patterson, PhD, University of Delaware; Megan Petrov, PhD, Arizona State University; Paul Peppard, PhD, University of Wisconsin; Douglas Teti, PhD, Pennsylvania State University; Meredith Wallace, PhD, University of Pittsburgh; and Kyla Wahlstrom, PhD, University of Minnesota. I am thrilled to see the Associate Editorial Board grow to include these incredible scholars.

As I write this in the spring of 2020, we are in the thick of a global COVID-19 pandemic. Like so many kids in the United States and other areas of the world, my kids (now ages 5 and 9) are home because schools are closed due to stay-at-home orders in place to stem the virus outbreak. For many of us, these are long, busy, and difficult days. We have new reasons to be sleep-deprived and are more psychologically fragile than we were in February. We are learning new ways of doing things, driving less, Zooming more, staying up later, sleeping in if we
can get away with it. We are finding novel ways to connect and alternative ways to work. From a personal perspective, the combination of contingency, improvisation, chaos, and sleep deprivation reminds me of how I felt when I started the Journal from my hospital bed, but now, rather than holding my infant in my arms, I’m cuddling my kindergartener as he sits on the couch beside me, learning to read.

As a counterpoint to the widespread physical distancing necessitated by the pandemic, I am witnessing the sleep research community from all over the world come together. Sleep researchers and public health scholars are contributing to news articles, editorials, Facebook posts, and tweets advising the public on how to prioritize their sleep and other health behaviors during an unprecedented time. I believe the Journal has helped strengthen the connections between the sleep research and public health communities.

As a parent, I’m aware of potential growing pains inherent in the transition from one developmental stage to the next. However, even in these uncertain times, I am optimistic about the upcoming transition in *Sleep Health*. I am ever grateful for being a part of the journey and growth of this Journal. Thank you for contributing to this community.

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