

What's In This Issue?

Letter from the founding facilitator for Volume 2,
issue 1

This is the first issue of Volume 2 and the first issue of 2021. Overall it is our sixth issue as we published five in 2020, our inaugural year. I think we had a very successful year in launching this new and unique journal.

For this issue, in the “what’s on your mind section” we have several submissions. Once again, Josh Freeman, our good friend and family medicine doctor who has great insight into the nature of our health care system, has allowed us to publish one of his outstanding essays that he puts on his blog site. This one focuses on how we as a nation are struggling to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and our “get out the vaccine” effort. Raghav Govindarajan has written two very empathetic pieces. One is about celebrating humanism in medicine and the other is about his experience with a patient with ALS. William Pridmore has submitted two articles from Tasmania, Australia. The first is an optimistic essay about ALS, and suggesting that we may be closing in on cracking “the code”. Dr Pridmore became close to ALS when his mother was diagnosed with the disease. This then stimulated him to find out more about the disease and he has written a very nice review article in the “Looking Past/ Looking Forward” section on some of the off-label and over the counter new potential therapies for ALS.

In the last issue I published “Rick’s North America Museum Ranking List”. In this issue I am joined by a number of colleagues to publish our recommended “Books to read before you graduate high school”. In the piece I relate the tale of how so many of my friends helped collect this list for the children of friends and relatives of mine who were going through a Bar or Bat- Mitzvah and I was trying to give them a unique gift. Read this piece to learn how it turned out! And send in comments to “what on your mind” to let us know if you agree or not on our selections. Remember, I also have lists for “books to read while you are in college”, and “books to read before you are 30”, etc. for each decade. So, if your book isn’t on this list, it may be on forthcoming lists I will send in.

Also in the “What’s on Your Mind” section is a piece I just wrote for my EVC of Health Affairs messages at the University of Missouri in honor of Black History Month about Vivien Thomas, a pioneer in open heart surgery.

In the “New Stuff” category we have Laura Herbelin and the University of Kansas Neuromuscular group presenting our new PADL-ALS scale, which is a modification of the traditional ALSFRS by our ALS patients. Our group was fortunate to be part of a PCORI network project called the Greater Plains Collaborative that chose ALS to be the rare disease of focus. We asked patients seen in ALS clinics throughout the GPC to consider modifying the ALS-FRS to make the language more patient friendly and also to suggest any other parameters they thought we should be assessing. They said we should add pain, easy crying or laughing, and spirituality questions, and they created the language. This paper is the first publication of these efforts and the data obtained in having ALS patients in the GPC complete the PADL-ALS.

We have a number of interesting cases in the “clinic stuff” category. Dr. Govindan and the anesthesiology pain group at the University of Kansas Medical Center report using pulsed radiofrequency ablation for entrapment of the anterior cutaneous nerve which they report can be a cause of chronic abdominal wall pain. Dr. Rim and colleagues at the Cleveland Clinic report a case of extraocular muscle metastasis of breast cancer producing the presenting symptoms of the cancer. Dr. Dhasakeerthi and colleagues at the University of Tennessee and University of Arkansas present a great case of a Marcus Gunn jaw “winking” phenomenon in a teenager with videos. In “visual stuff”, Dr. Inan and colleagues in Turkey (Hacettepe University Faculty of Medicine) show an MRI picture of an enlarged, swollen sciatic nerve which they term the “cane sign” because the image looked like a cane!

Finally, for the first five issues of the journal I have used the art of Rembrandt for the cover. It seemed that was a good place to start. The art I chose was found on search. creativecommons.org and is available to show without getting permission. For this issue, I wanted to honor Black History Month and I chose a painting by the Black artist David Bates. I own this painting so I do not need permission to publish the image. He painted a series of the faces of people in New Orleans post-Katrina. They are haunting. I think the one called “Woman in Shock” is particularly heart wrenching.

Rick