

Editorial

1. Anatomy Education: The Continuing Controversy

The Yuletide season of 2004 is approaching and not unexpectedly the 4th ASEN scientific conference is gathering momentum to wind-down the rigorous academic activities of the passing year. As Y.D Yates, President of American Anatomical Society posits: "The health of a scientific society is reflected by the success of its annual meetings". How true this statement is about ASEN, which had its maiden conference in 2001 and has continued annually ever since. The 2004 meeting at Owerri promises to be a well organized and attended conference. Don't be left out.

As indications continue to emerge that the medical curriculum in Nigeria may soon visit the surgeon's table, biomedical scientists are putting heads together. Inevitably, this has generated so much controversy as to the direction of this change. Anatomists are not left out.

Historically, from the time of Aristotle, the study of form (and function) in the living world has been considered a fundamental part of education in the life sciences (Blits, 1999). That is, some would argue, until recently (Paalman, 2000). Already in some medical institutions, this argument appeared to have led to the gradual erosion of medical school gross anatomy courses, especially in areas of cadaver dissection. This is worrisome to anatomists. With these developments there are also indications that the anatomical knowledge acquired during medical school in Switzerland, United States of America and else where is usually not sufficient for post graduate training as surgeons, radiologists and physicians(Groscurth et al, 2001, Anibeze, 2003). This presents a clearly exciting and challenging time for the anatomical sciences in Nigeria, especially with indications of medical curriculum review by the Nigerian Medical and Dental Council. We must work enthusiastically to preserve our discipline as the bedrock of the medical sciences.

As Paalman, (2000) mentioned it seems more evident that a lack of adequate anatomy training in education and research will impinge on the ultimate progress of biomedical research enterprise as a whole. It is in line with this, that the editorial unit of JECA encourages readers and authors to address this extraordinary important topic by way of *Letters to the Editor* or a thoroughly researched article for publication. Dr. B.C. Didia of the Department of Anatomy, University of Porthacourt takes a cue on the topic with the lead paper in this issue of JECA. However the views expressed in his article are the author's opinion.

Do this contribution as an anatomist for anatomy, and don't let this century of biology forget from whence it came - from a history built on anatomy. Merry Christmas.

Dr. C.I.P Anibeze, Editor, Journal Experimental and Clinical Anatomy

Literature cited

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Groscurth P. et al (2001) Gross anatomy in the surgical curriculum of Switzerland. *Anat. Rec. (New Anat.)* 265: 254-256.
Paalman MH (2000) Why Teach Anatomy? Anatomists Respond. *Anat. Rec. (New Anat.)* 261: 1-2.

II. JECA ON AJOL WEBSITE

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