I can’t believe another year has come and gone! It’s amazing how quickly 2017 flew by. It’s been an interesting and fluid year for me, and I am thrilled that we have made it to 2018 with another highly successful year at both of our journals! Before we look ahead to the New Year, let’s look back at 2017 to review and highlight the many events and accomplishments that our 2 journals have experienced over the past 12 months.

Every year at the Editorial Board meeting, I like to acknowledge all of the tireless and unselfish work of many individuals who bring our journals to you, our readers. Let me first acknowledge the work of our publisher, SAGE, which has been our steady partner for the past 7 years. We work with a number of talented individuals at SAGE, and we are honored to acknowledge the work of Lauren Hunt, Society Journals Manager, Journals STM; Alisia Lemos, Project Editor, Journals; Kelsey Ohle, Senior Account Executive; Tara Stivers, Marketing Manager, Journals; Alyssa Venezia, Senior Editorial Assistant, STM Journals; Bob Vrooman, Director STM Journals; Katie Waters, Advertising Coordinator; and Kate Williamson, Senior Project Editor, Journals. It is a pleasure to work with our SAGE team.

We also remain grateful to SAGE for its continued support of the American Academy of Otolaryngology—Head and Neck Surgery Foundation’s (AAO-HNSF’s) annual Cochrane Scholars Program, through which recipients are selected to receive travel grants to attend the annual Cochrane Colloquium and prepare a systematic review on a topic of their choice for publication consideration in the journal. The highly qualified Cochrane Scholars for 2017 were Meredith Adams, Matthew Bush, Edward McCoul, Uchechukwu Megwulu, and Heather Weinreich. Please join me in congratulating them for their selection for this prestigious award.

We could not bring the journals to you without our dedicated and hardworking staff of professionals in our Academy office in Alexandria. It seems like I am in touch with them almost every day as we work to provide the highest quality product for all of our readers. Special thanks to Collin Grabarek, Managing Editor; Donna Epler, Assistant Managing Editor; Dain Oswald, Senior Manager, Digital Content; Jeanne McIntyre, Director of Communications and Publications; and Kathy Lewis, Senior Director of Communications. I thoroughly enjoy working with each and every one of them. Make sure you pass on your thanks to them for the wonderful work that they do. I would be remiss not to thank our CEO and EVP at the Academy and Foundation, James Denny III, who is a staunch and vocal supporter of the journals and their missions. Jim works tirelessly for our members, and I am thrilled to have his support as a colleague and friend at the Academy.

We are privileged to have the most talented and dedicated team of editors and reviewers of any journal, and I am thrilled to thank and honor all of them. Let me start with my good friend and sturdy associate, Cecelia Schmalbach, who offers great integrity, wisdom, and enthusiasm in her role as Deputy Editor of Otolaryngology—Head and Neck Surgery. She has been an outstanding partner and friend, and oversaw both the launch of the Resident Reviewer Development Program and the Patient Safety and Quality Improvement initiative for the journals. I am excited to announce that Cecelia was recently selected by the Board of Directors to be the next Coordinator for Research and Quality for the AAO-HNSF, and all of us at the journals wish her the very best in her new assignment! Dr. Schmalbach will assume her new role in October 2018. Taking over the role of Deputy Editor will be Jennifer Shin, who is certainly no stranger to scientific publishing or to our journals. I look forward to her energy and exceptional knowledge as she works closely with me in 2018.

I would then like to thank all of our Associate Editors who manage papers from the time of submission through review. Their diligent work is what keeps our time from submission to first decision low, at right around 1 month! Please join me in thanking Meredith Adams, Lee Akst, Cristina Baldassari, Mark Boston, Matthew Brigger, David Chang, Thomas Eby, Jivianne Lee, Ho-Sheng Lin, Jeffrey Liu, Sonya Malekzadeh, Whit Mims, Matthew Ryan, James Saunders, Jennifer Shin, Lawrence Simon, Andrew Shuman, Michael Singer, David Stepnick, Pablo Stolovitzky, and Gordon Sun. Special thanks to Drs Saunders, Ryan, and Sun, who rotated off as Associate Editors this year.

I would also like to thank both our journals’ Editorial Boards and Otolaryngology—Head and Neck Surgery’s newly invigorated International Editorial Board. These talented and
respected individuals have distinguished themselves through the hard work they have exerted for the journals and for representing us as ambassadors both domestically and abroad. We look to our board members to advocate on behalf of the journals in attracting and securing excellent manuscripts for submission and review. I would also like to thank our over 900 manuscript reviewers, who give of their time on weekends and evenings to provide careful and unbiased peer review for our many submissions. The names of those individuals who have completed at least 4 reviews in the past year are listed in the accompanying piece published after this editorial.

To provide the highest quality peer review, we encourage all of our reviewers to continue to become more skilled in the process and to strive for the highest possible level of performance. For many years, we have annually recognized those individuals who have excelled in the peer review process and designate them as “Star Reviewers.” This year, we were privileged to acknowledge the top 13 reviewers, each of whom completed at least 8 manuscript reviews over the past year and achieved the highest mean quality ratings for their reviews as judged by the Editor in Chief. I am thrilled to recognize our 2017 Star Reviewers: Kartik Balakrishnan, Sarah Bowe, Andrew Coughlin, John Dahl, Thomas Gallagher, Courtney Hill, Alexander Hillel, Romaine Johnson, Elliott Kozin, Jose Lapena Jr., Chau Nguyen, Aru Panwar, and James Ruda.

For the third straight year, our impact factor (IF) continued above 2.00 with a 13% increase to 2.276! This news was incredibly exciting, and we made sure to celebrate our good fortune and hard work! In addition to our increased IF, which is a metric of how frequently our articles are cited by others in their publications, our utilization by readers and authors also continued to increase as assessed by other bibliometrics. We again reviewed over 2000 papers in 2017, with 1481 of those papers submitted as new manuscripts (an increase of 7% from 2016). We also increased our already large pool of podcasts by 18 new recordings in 2017, with total downloads over a recent 1-year period surpassing 42,000, a 30% increase from 2016! This number continues to be remarkable, and the use of our podcasts demonstrates the sustained value of our content. We featured a themed issue on “Residency Education in Otolaryngology” in June 2017, as well as a supplement featuring papers from the recent International Conference on Recent Advances in Otitis Media.

It is vital to the continued success of the journals’ peer review mechanisms to recruit and educate a vibrant pool of new reviewers, as well as to enhance the skills of our already successful reviewers. It is also a mission for us here at the journals to develop our resident physicians as able and skilled reviewers. It is our responsibility to be effective mentors and educators for our younger colleagues, into whose capable hands we will be passing the specialty. To address both of these critical areas, we developed a program for residents in which they can become involved as reviewers through a closely monitored and mentored process that will lead to their functioning over time as independent peer reviewers. We completed our first cohort of resident graduates in 2017 and were thrilled to recognize 14 individuals who were advanced to full reviewer status. Under the able direction of our Deputy Editor, Cecelia Schmalbach, this innovative program was highly successful and will be continued under her leadership in 2018. This program can serve as a model for other journals to recruit and promote talent from among our resident physicians, who will be the future leaders of our societies.

It’s important to point out to our readership that we have considerable resources available for new and seasoned reviewers alike through which they can refine their reviewing skills. We have housed some of these resources online at http://www.editorialmanager.com/otohns under the “Reviewer Instructions” link. In addition, I would strongly urge all reviewers to become familiar with and embrace the methodology highlighted by Richard Rosenfeld in his excellent article on reviewing. We also offer instruction courses and panels at the AAO-HNSF Annual Meeting and OTO Experience both on reviewing manuscripts and on getting published. At the journals, individuals can advance through a meritocratic process, in which successful and highly rated reviewers are invited to join the journals’ Editorial Boards, and active members of those groups are invited to become Associate Editors and assist with decisions regarding submitted manuscripts. We are proud that at the journals, we have a broad and diverse group of editorial board members who reflect all demographics and ages and represent our Academy’s membership to our authors and readers.

Finally, we are thrilled to announce that we launched our AAO-HNSF open access journal, OTO Open: The Official Open Access Journal of the American Academy of Otolaryngology—Head and Neck Surgery Foundation, on January 1, 2017. The early success of this new journal has been palpable, and we have now published over 30 articles in 2017 through OTO Open. This new publication has provided a venue for a broad variety of papers in otolaryngology–head and neck surgery. It has also allowed us to adopt a broader editorial approach and has featured a healthy volume of case reports, as well as articles from our international colleagues on topics of local and regional interest. With the publication of its 30th article, we are now eligible to apply for PubMed indexing for OTO Open, which will allow wider search access to content published in this online-only journal. We hope that you will consider OTO Open as an appropriate venue for your next scholarly manuscript!

Of course, as is always the case, I give my most heartfelt and deepest thanks to our authors—the men and women who demonstrate confidence in Otolaryngology—Head and Neck Surgery and in OTO Open by submitting their works to us for review. We take this privilege very seriously and are committed to providing thorough, detailed, thoughtful, and unbiased peer review that not only allows us to accept the best papers submitted to us but also can help to improve these already strong research studies and reviews. We pledge to our authors a rapid review process, with the goal of providing our first feedback and decision in around 1 month. All of our reviewers and editorial staff adhere to the value of this level of performance, and we will hold ourselves accountable to achieve it.
Given the central and influential role of our journals both within otolaryngology–head and neck surgery and throughout the house of medicine, we will continually strive to position our journals as valuable and trusted sources for the best, most accurate, and most current knowledge in our specialty.

Once again, I would like to give my deepest thanks to our entire community of reviewers, editors, authors, staff, and readers. Thank you for your continued interactions with Otolaryngology–Head and Neck Surgery and OTO Open. Have a healthy, prosperous, and joyous 2018.

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