From the Editor

What goes around

Dear EBP Readers,

Editors are human beings just like everyone else. But by golly, editors have standards. That is the whole point of the job.

Nevertheless, I always feel pangs of guilt when I hear from a staff member at the office of Evidence-Based Practice (EBP) that my editorial comments have made some budding young author angry or, worse yet, reduced someone to tears of frustration. Naturally I regret causing anyone distress, but I console myself that editors have to stand up for:

- strong declarative sentences
- appropriate application of strength of recommendations (SORs)
- the inclusion of user-friendly statistics
- standardized bibliographies

However, I don’t always wear my EBP editor hat. Sometimes, I find myself authoring FPIN Clinical Inquiries (CIs) with residents at the program where I teach. CIs are managed by a different department in the FPIN organization from EBP, and my CI manuscripts are subjected to the same battery of independent editorial review that all CI manuscripts receive. But consider my surprise when I received these editorial comments on the first draft of my most recent CI effort:

- please use strong declarative sentences
- reconsider the SORs you have chosen
- include user-friendly statistics
- write the bibliography in standard format

I was absolutely flabbergasted. How could I be accused of making these basic mistakes? Once I had my emotions under control, however, I reviewed the manuscript and found that the editor was absolutely correct on all counts.

This just reinforces my often-stated belief that professional writing is a team sport. Editorial review is required to challenge our assumptions, hone our writing clarity, and remove our idiosyncratic language. As an author, I try very hard to be thankful when editors have taken the time to review my writing and have worked with me to create a product that is truly worthy of the FPIN community.

I’d always rather revise than embarrass myself in print. I do that enough as it is.

Regards,

Jon O. Neher, MD