A Call for Viewpoints

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There are many controversial issues in the practice of oncology. These are the topics we hear debated in point-counterpoints at meetings, are the subjects of grand rounds presentations at our institutions and hospitals, and are the basis of decisions that keep us awake at night. JAMA Oncology aims to provide a forum where the controversies in oncology and oncologic science can be defined, discussed, and debated. JAMA Oncology publishes several types of opinion pieces, including Editorials, Invited Commentaries, Cancer Care Chronicles, and Viewpoints, each of which serves a separate purpose.

Viewpoints are brief (<1200 words) scholarly manuscripts, written by a limited number of authors (<3) and having a limited number of references (<7), that focus on a specific issue of emerging interest to the cancer community.

Viewpoints should have a strong point of view. These articles are not minireviews, nor are they expected to be bland presentations of differing opinions. Viewpoints should represent a carefully considered scientific argument delivered in a concise fashion. The opinion expressed should provoke the reader to think and question his or her own stand on the issue.

Viewpoints should be timely. These essays should cover rapidly emerging or evolving subjects, and preferably should anticipate rather than follow the field. For this reason, Viewpoints should avoid the pack mentality. If a subject or topic has been written about extensively, it is unlikely an author will be able to add something substantially novel or interesting to further pique the reader’s imagination. Novelty is crucial.

Viewpoints should be interesting. Scientific manuscripts follow strict rules, and literary quality is not the prime concern. Viewpoints, in contrast, may be readable, articulate, erudite, engaging, and enjoyable. Our goal is to publish Viewpoints that will be memorable.

Viewpoints by definition are opinionated, but not obnoxious. One can hold strong opinions and propound them with rigorous logic and strong data without delivering either a rant or a personal attack. Viewpoints remain scholarly manuscripts; Cancer Care Chronicles are reserved for personal experience.

Most important, Viewpoints should have impact. A successful Viewpoint should help set the agenda—either a scientific agenda for oncologists or a public agenda for the larger society of which we are citizens.

We invite you to submit a Viewpoint. Please see Instructions for Authors at http://jamaoncology.com to find out how to start the next debate.