

# Mehrotra Named Senior Editor-in-Chief of ASN Journals

By Karen Blum



After serving as editor-in-chief of the *Clinical Journal of the American Society of Nephrology (CJASN)* for nearly 7 years, Rajnish Mehrotra, MD, MS, FASN, will assume a new role next January, as editor-in-chief of the *Journal of the American Society of Nephrology (JASN)* and senior editor-in-chief for the ASN journal portfolio of *CJASN*, *JASN*, and *Kidney360*.

Mehrotra, the Belding H. Scribner Endowed Chair in Medicine and head of the Division of Nephrology at the University of Washington

School of Medicine in Seattle, talked to *Kidney News (KN)* about this move and what innovations he has in store.

## KN: What interested you in taking on this new role overseeing the portfolio of ASN’s journals?

Mehrotra: ASN’s three journals have not functioned in a coordinated manner as part of a portfolio. Each journal has set its own independent vision and has had its own strategic direction. This is the first time that ASN has moved to create a portfolio that allows for coordinating the efforts. Because I’ve been the editor-in-chief of one of the three journals, it positions me well to take on this inaugural role. Collectively, it is the most elite of all journal portfolios in nephrology. The possibility of having an impact on the field in assuming the role is what attracted me.

## KN: Tell us more about how you will help foster collaboration and teamwork across the journals.

Mehrotra: There will be three editors-in-chief, one for each journal. I will be one, and I’ll be leaving the second, so I understand fully the opportunities and challenges. For us to work together, we need to define explicitly for our authors and our readers the scope of each of the three journals, how they differ from each other, and where they overlap and ensure that we work in a way that we avoid overlap between content [so] that we solicit and maximize the impact that we have.

I would plan annual face-to-face and virtual meetings for the editors to help build engagement, trust, and buy-in for the three journals to view themselves as part of a single portfolio.

## KN: What types of changes or innovations can readers expect to see as these journals move toward a more cohesive approach?

Mehrotra: *CJASN* publishes original research that is patient-oriented but has a broader

scope, including anything and everything that affects the clinical practice of nephrology—whether it is public policy, an approach on how to implement the recent findings from research in clinical practice, or as we have reintroduced in the past 7 years, what we call the patient voice, where we provide patients a platform to comment on research published in *CJASN*. In terms of coordinating efforts, it’s an important niche that *CJASN* occupies.

*JASN* has been traditionally focused primarily on research, which is appropriate. But I think there’s an opportunity to broaden the scope to put into context how to apply the findings to further advance research and innovation. My hope is to introduce a new article type that could be called “Evidence Updates,” a set of articles that provides a comprehensive, state-of-the-art summary of our knowledge regarding the pathophysiology of kidney diseases or their complications more broadly. *Kidney360* has a special place in being the open access journal for nephrology within the ASN portfolio and focuses on kidney disease care models around the world.

There are synergies in infrastructure [that] we hope to create across the three journals to further enhance the quality of the output that we publish. Research methods used to advance science have evolved considerably, and there are people who have specific expertise in individual research methods. I envision teams of statistical editors and visual abstract editors across the journals, with a lead editor for each to oversee those teams. I would also like to see a coordinated approach to disseminate the content that we publish. Right now, we publish them online, and there is a paper copy for *JASN* and *CJASN*, but there is cross-cutting content published across the three journals. My hope is [that] we can create collaborative approaches to disseminate the content, such as webinars or podcasts. Topics could include recent advances in managing diabetic kidney disease, advancing wearable technologies for dialysis, or challenges with equity in health outcomes for kidney diseases. Those are some ideas.

## KN: What are your plans for the near term and down the road?

Mehrotra: The immediate short-term, up to this December, is to identify the new editor-in-chief for *CJASN* and assemble a team of editors for both *JASN* and *CJASN*. Then, starting in January 2024, we will implement the infrastructure across the three journals, such as shared statistical expertise and shared dissemination strategies. We will have social media strategies and programs to provide opportunities for trainees to be involved in journal work. By the end of 2024 into 2025, my hope is that you will see new content in the pages of *JASN*, such as the evidence updates and new perspectives.

## KN: What are you most proud of in your time as editor-in-chief of CJASN?

Mehrotra: A tremendous increase in rigor and impact of the content that we publish. Rigor means a lot of different things. It is the internal and external validity of the science that we publish. But it’s also ensuring that we follow the highest standards of presentation of clinical research from article to article. What has followed is a substantial increase in impact, whether you measure that by the number of articles that are downloaded or our presence on social media. I think collectively, it has enhanced the value of the journal for our readers. I have heard repeatedly that authors around the world value the opportunity to publish their work in *CJASN*. I find that the highest measure of success. ■

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