Publishing systematic reviews in *Canadian Family Physician*

Tony Reid, MD, MSC, CCFP, FCFP

When Charles Leduc and I wrote the original Guidelines for Articles 8 years ago, we debated about whether systematic reviews were continuing medical education (CME) or were research, in order to determine in which section of *Canadian Family Physician* they would be placed. Ultimately, we decided on the CME section, where they have been published since that time.

Over the years, however, systematic reviews that have been submitted have been increasingly sophisticated and appear to be more and more like "research projects in the library." I have become increasingly uncomfortable with their designation as CME pieces.

Consequently, I consulted various researchers and CME experts, as well as our Editorial Advisory Board members. Librarians were also very helpful in clarifying the issue.

The designation appears to hinge on the fact that a properly executed systematic review attempts to discover new knowledge by analysis and synthesis of existing literature. The creation of new knowledge is the key difference between this kind of article and a CME piece that is, in contrast, attempting to convey the latest information on a subject.

As a result of this consultation, we have decided to modify our policy and publish systematic reviews in the Research section of the journal. The actual guidelines themselves are not altered. Publication in the Research section means that systematic reviews will still go through the same peer-review process, but will now appear as "print short, Web long," where a longer abstract and Editor's Key Points appear in the print version, and the full text is available on the College of Family Physicians of Canada's website (**www.cfpc.ca**).

Our first example of this change is the review by Ploeg (**page 1245**) this month. We hope this new policy will be well received by our readers. ❧

Dr Reid practises family medicine in Orillia, Ont, and is Scientific Editor of Canadian Family Physician.