

Letter from the Editor

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In this issue of the *Missouri Health Journal*, we present a record number of original research articles and clinical reports in addition to our usual fare of abstracts from campus events. Our last issue was the first issue of *Missouri Health* to include several original research articles, and our submission pool has only grown since then. Clearly, there is a demand for a University of Missouri-centered journal such as ours. As our submissions from students, residents, and junior faculty grow, we are glad to be able to provide *Missouri Health* as a publication venue for our community.

Original Research

Beginning on page 6 in the Original Research category, a group of attorneys and physicians (including myself) write about our experience in operating our unique University of Missouri Law veterans clinic. The goal of the reported clinic is to assist veterans in obtaining and utilizing medical disability benefits. The University of Missouri Law School began the clinic shortly before I came to the University of Missouri, and we saw a unique opportunity to combine the resources of the School of Medicine with the expertise of the Law School in service of our veterans. Each veteran's case is reviewed by both law students and medical students, and all students are supervised by combined law and medical faculty. While we are not the only law school in the US that serves veterans in this fashion, we are the first university in which the medical school collaborates with the law school. You can read the details about how this clinic was started in the full article.

In the following article, our orthopedic surgery department reports their experience using a social theory based survey tool, called locus of control, to measure and predict health outcomes after post-operative spinal surgery. They conclude that patients with a higher sense of ownership over their condition experience greater satisfaction. The lead authors, Daniel Chausse and Brennan Spellman are third year medical students at the University of Missouri School of Medicine.

In an additional publication from the orthopedic surgery department, authors investigate the effect of early physical therapy post-operatively after spinal surgery. They conclude that the earlier the physical therapy is initiated after surgery, the earlier the patient

can be safely discharged. The first author, Daniel Hogan, is an orthopedic surgery resident here at the University of Missouri, and conducted this research under senior surgeon Don Moore, MD.

The third and final orthopedic article published in this issue is first authored by University of Missouri medical student – now orthopedic resident – Ashwin Garlapaty, MD. In this article, Garlapaty et al describe the authors' experience with proximal femur fractures fixation and geographic demographics of the patient population as an outcome determinant. The authors conclude that rural patients do not have a higher mortality compared to urban patients, and provide a robust discussion on management considerations of geographically diffuse patient populations.

The final article in the Original Research section reiterates this theme of rural health challenges, investigating how travel time and geographic distance from dermatology specialty clinics impacts patient utilization of medically necessary dermatology services. This project was once again lead by University of Missouri medical students, Rebecca Ernst and Bailey Patrick. Patrick has since graduated and is now a dermatology resident here at the University of Missouri.

Clinical Reports

There are two articles featured in the Clinical Reports section of this issue. In the first of these articles, the Department of Dermatology reports a case of venous stasis dermatitis that evolved into *Pasteurella multocida* bacteremia. University of Missouri medical students Sean Pirrone and Lea Khoukaz worked under attending Benjamin Casterline, MD, PhD, to bring this case to the *Missouri Health* readership.

The second case report is from the Department of Neurology and is first authored by then medical student, now neurology resident, Lauren Nowakowski. The report describes safe use of cenobamate in pregnancy to control seizures, in which cenobamate effectively controlled the patient's seizures and resulted in no harm to the fetus. The authors provide a detailed discussion of guidelines for management of epilepsy in pregnancy using cenobamate and other methods.

Proceedings in Print

The *Missouri Health Journal* also publishes a number of highly impactful talks given at various events and ceremonies around campus in the section "Proceedings in Print". The first of these talks was given by Dr. Dima Dandachi at the University of Missouri 2026 Commencement, who was chosen by the graduating class of 2026 to be the commencement speaker for the event. In her speech, Dr. Dandachi delivered an inspiring call to action to the future physicians in the room, including my favorite lines "Do not be afraid to care. Do not be afraid to feel."

While Commencement marks the completion of a

medical student's four years, the White Coat Ceremony welcomes incoming students and sets the tone for the years to come. University of Missouri alumnus Dr. Jane Knapp, School of Medicine Class of 1978, served as keynote speaker for the 2026 White Coat Ceremony. In her speech, Dr. Knapp discussed the symbolism of the physician's white coat and how it impacted her own career, offering students five points of advice and philosophy to guide their careers.

Following Dr. Knapp's talk, you will find the remarks given at the same ceremony from M4 class presidents Jenny Kim and Kousalya Velagapudi. Kim and Velagapudi are class presidents for the Columbia and Springfield campuses, respectively, and jointly delivered advice to the freshman class from the vantage point of senior medical students.

I have also published my own remarks from two events on campus. In November 2025, I spoke at the 2025 Health Sciences Research Day, an annual event to showcase trainee research at the University of Missouri. I spoke on the origins of scientific collaboration, reminding the group that all scientific conferences emanate from the first Royal Society of London for Improving Natural Knowledge in 1660. I also had the privilege of being the keynote speaker at the 2025 University of Missouri Library Society Annual Reception. In this talk I had the opportunity to share my passion for books and libraries, and the impact such resources had on my life and career.

Abstracts

Finally, we are publishing many abstracts submitted by literally hundreds of MU trainees. We are publishing abstracts from the following annual research events:

- 2025 Cardiovascular Day, Hosted by the Dalton Cardiovascular Research Center
- 2026 Cardiovascular Day, Hosted by the Dalton Cardiovascular Research Center
- 2025 Health Sciences Research Day, Hosted by the School of Medicine

Concluding Remarks

I am grateful for how the concept of the *Missouri Health Journal* has been embraced by so many University of Missouri students and faculty. I am looking forward to seeing the evolution of this journal. I am also very grateful to Dr. Dave Arnold, who served as the inaugural Editor-in-Chief of *Missouri Health*. I am glad to be able to take on this duty as the new Editor-in-Chief and I am looking forward to working with students and faculty throughout campus who support this journal.

I'd also like to acknowledge Mikayla Fraunfelder, an MD/PhD student, who has taken on the role of Managing Editor for *Missouri Health*. Fraunfelder, along with a number of medical student Associate Editors from

all four classes, volunteer their time and labor to make this journal possible. Looking ahead, we are excited improve our publishing rates in the coming years and accept more and more original research from throughout the University of Missouri.

To close, I am pleased to be able to feature another incredible piece of art from the University of Missouri Museum of Art and Archeology. The painting, which has been attributed to Hans Mielich, is dated from 1561 and is titled *Portrait of Martin Klostermair*. We discovered this beautiful painting in the storage vaults of the University of Missouri Museum of Art & Archeology. You can read more about this painting and its history in the "About the Cover" commentary provided by the museum's Interim Director, Marie Nau Hunter, on page 5. Not only is *Portrait of Martin Klostermair* an incredible work of art, we were also struck by the writing directly on the canvas which reads "Such are the eyes of the physician". This sentiment seemed particularly appropriate given Dr. Dandachi's and Dr. Knapp's insightful talks to the graduating and incoming medical students, respectfully, about the importance of compassion and care for their future patients.



Dr. Richard J. Barohn, Editor-in-Chief, visiting the portrait in storage at Mizzou's Museum of Art and Archaeology.