

Value-Added Innovation Should Be Responsible and Relevant

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Our capacity to deal with novelty is largely a function of the right side of our brain. The right hemisphere is traditionally described by some neuroscientists as the “inferior” one in terms of cognitive functions, because it is the left side that governs our abilities in language and basic or linear logic. It is now clear, however, that the right hemisphere is the “exploratory” part of the brain, dedicated to discovery and learning.

It has been stated that people who remain engaged in life often display an attitude of openness to new and unexpected experiences. And people who are receptive to novelty and innovation also tend to be good in a crisis, because they are open to seeing opportunity in the most challenging of situations.

As physicians, we understandably take comfort in relying on time-honored edicts and



“Too often... we may rely only on information that supports our point of view.”

existing data. Too often, however, we may rely on information that supports only our existing instinct or point of view, and we may settle for the best available “mediocre choice.” Our desires for certainty may rule out innovative approaches, perpetuate the status quo, and slow incremental improvement in patient satisfaction and functional outcomes. The challenge is balancing the responsibility of providing “evidence-based” treatment with a desire to provide a value-added, relevant, “cutting-edge” solution.

Having an open mind—what Buddhist monks refer to as the “beginner’s mind”—reflects a willingness to step back from prior knowledge and existing conventions in order to start over and cultivate new options. In *Zen Mind, Beginner’s Mind*,¹ Shunryu Suzuki acknowledges, “In the beginner’s mind there are many possibilities, but in the expert’s there are few.”

In this supplement, I have asked the authors—each of whom is uniquely qualified as both expert and innovator—to highlight responsible and relevant innovative treatments for thumb, wrist, and elbow arthritis. I encourage you to study each article with an open mind, to follow the evidence base as it develops, and to conscientiously include novel, value-added treatment alternatives in your armamentarium.

References

1. Suzuki S. *Zen Mind, Beginner’s Mind*. 2006; Boston, Mass: Shambhala Publications, Inc.

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Am J Orthop. 2008;37(8 suppl): 3. Copyright 2008, Quadrant HealthCom Inc.

A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

I would like to thank Small Bone Innovations, Inc., for providing the educational support for this supplement, and the authors for presenting these new options in the treatment of hand and elbow arthritis. I hope you find this work both informative and helpful in improving the quality of care for your patients.

Peter D. McCann, MD
 Editor-in-Chief