Editorial

*Ruptures Passes the Torch*

Well over a decade ago, GRIS, the *Groupe de recherche interdisciplinaire en santé* (interdisciplinary health research group), in close collaboration with the Faculty of Medicine’s Assistant Dean of Public Health and the departments of Health Administration and Social and Preventive Medicine, launched the multidisciplinary journal, *Ruptures*. Dr. Ron Levy, who was then a professor in the department of Social and Preventive Medicine, became the journal’s editor-in-chief. An advisory board and a scientific committee were set up and an editorial team established to oversee the publication of the journal. In the early days, *Ruptures* got its direction and initial impetus from the founding team, and funding from the *Fonds de la recherche en santé du Québec* (FRSQ).

Ever since, *Ruptures*’ mission has remained unchanged. Despite the many transformations it has undergone over the course of its history, the journal’s initial mission statement has always been deemed appropriate and, to this day, is printed in the endpaper of each issue. Initially, *Ruptures* was designed to be different, and its title was chosen to highlight this difference.

In his very first editorial, Ron Levy described *Ruptures* as a journal that broke away from the traditional model of learned journals. Its mission was to deviate from the norm, explore the essence and limits of our understanding of the concept of health, question the meaning of scientific endeavour and technology and the significance of public health work, and examine emerging concepts. Dr. Levy’s editorial was influenced by B. Latour’s *La science en action*, a challenging agenda for those who are familiar with the work. He also wisely added that “without players to explore new prospects, without an audience to react and respond, no dialogue is possible.” Clearly, the journal needed authors to submit their thoughts and ideas, and readers to read, comment on and contribute to the journal.

Ron Levy was more than just an editor of a learned journal: he was the driving force behind *Ruptures* and opened it to different perspectives on public health. His editorials questioned public health and challenged it by finding something that could link planning, action, practice and the future of public health. *Ruptures* thus became a forum for reflection on public health. Reflections on the concept of health, aspects of healthcare systems, epistemological, theoretical and methodological approaches, and the historical evolution of public health were published alongside articles on specific areas of public health practice: smoking, hospital care, technology, use and costs of healthcare services, and so on. The journal included regular features such as a perspectives column, letters to the editor, book reviews and a forum for discussion, which provided the kind of dialogue Ron Levy had called for in his first editorial. In short, the vast majority of articles published in *Ruptures* at that time were reflections on public health; there were few articles on empirical studies. As intended, *Ruptures* advanced its mission and encouraged critical thinking.

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Over the course of the first five years, the editorial team evolved. Professor Louise Potvin became associate editor and introduced a realistic, albeit critical, perspective that introduced a wider range of viewpoints on public health. Pierre de Coninck became Ruptures’ assistant editor and Isabelle Laporte lent her expertise to the editorial team.

Under the new team, Ruptures underwent a significant management and organizational change. Although the change had an impact on the journal’s direction, its mission remained intact. In an editorial published in 1998 (issue 5.2), Raynald Pineault, then co-editor, announced that the Université de Montréal’s School of Public Health (Faculty of Medicine) would henceforth be responsible for publishing Ruptures. The departments of Health Administration, Social and Preventive Medicine, Occupational Health, Environmental Health and International Health joined forces with GRIS. A new scientific committee paved the way and gave a voice to public health researchers in Quebec, Canada, France, Belgium and the United States. Dr. Jean-Louis Denis became editor-in-chief, Claude Sicotte, managing editor.

Although the new editorial team introduced changes to the editorial policy, Ruptures remained a journal of critical thought and continued to disseminate public health research results. However, the team now aspired to make the journal a medium for disseminating knowledge within the international francophone public health community. Each issue would henceforth be devoted to one topic, and renowned researchers were now responsible for mounting a dossier of interrelated articles on a specific topic in their field of expertise. This format had already been used for the last three issues published before the new editorial team came on board. The topics varied and addressed contemporary debates at the centre of public health concerns: organizational performance, the evolving concept of public health, professional practice in health promotion, human resources, changes in healthcare systems, integrated services, technology and drugs. The journal continued its tradition of exploring critical thought and disseminating research results through original articles alongside opinion pieces, commentaries and exchanges.

With the publication of the ninth issue, François Béland was appointed editor-in-chief. He put together an editorial team of four, with each member responsible for a specific area of public health. The team maintained their predecessors’ editorial policies and led the publication until this last issue. Two critical events marked this period and jeopardized the journal’s survival. Jean-Louis Denis and Claude Sicotte joined the team with a distinct international ambition for the journal: to achieve the status of a reputable public health journal throughout the entire French-speaking world. Other French-language journals with international missions in specific areas of public health already existed. Rather than concentrating its efforts on disseminating existing journals, the new Observatoire Franco-Québécois de la Santé et de la Solidarité launched a new journal on health and social solidarity in 2002, Santé, Société et Solidarité. Like Ruptures, from the outset, the Observatoire’s journal published topic-related articles on the contemporary challenges facing public health and healthcare systems.

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The second significant event was the launch of a bilingual, Canadian learned journal on healthcare policy, *Healthcare Policy–Politiques de Santé*. For several years, Canadian researchers in healthcare policy and systems had been hoping to found a journal in which they could publish critical thought and research results relevant to a Canadian public. *Ruptures* collaborated on the founding of *Healthcare Policy–Politiques de Santé*, which has been published since 2005. This new journal, in keeping with the original intents of *Ruptures*’ founders, combines regular features, commentaries, debates and critical thought. In addition, the journal will report on research results and on efforts made to disseminate evidence-based healthcare policy governing decision-making and planning. Since *Healthcare Policy–Politiques de Santé* publishes in both French and English, contributors to *Ruptures* will discover an interesting medium for their articles.

Those visiting the publication’s website at [www.longwoods.com/home.php?cat=247](http://www.longwoods.com/home.php?cat=247) will also find an active link to *Ruptures*’ website, where they can consult all articles published over the course of its ten-year existence.

And so, *Ruptures* passes the torch, but not before taking a final bow in the best of tradition. In this issue, *Ruptures* publishes the *Entretiens Jacques Cartier 2004* conference talks on health resource allocation. Social, economical, political, legal, democratic and philosophical problems of health resource allocation are addressed from an ethics perspective, a perspective that is being questioned and that faces a new healthcare order. And what better way to foster questioning than with feature articles on the concept of health itself. The four articles that round off this last issue bring *Ruptures*’ days to a close. Whereas the first issues of *Ruptures* addressed critical thought on ethical questions, on the necessary healthcare reforms and on the meaning of public health practice, the tradition of critical thinking continues with *Healthcare Policy–Politiques de Santé*.

François Bélant
Editor-in-chief