Editorial

Audiologists’ Professional Satisfaction

For more than 40 years, I have heard prophesies of gloom and disaster about the future of our profession. In the early years, there was a good deal of concern about how physicians were certain to control us. Either they would absorb us or they would end-run around us and train their nurses to do our job. Somewhat later, it was the dispensing of hearing aids. Tainting our hands by actually selling the prosthetic device surely spelled the end of civilization as we knew it. Similarly, when the Academy was first formed, there were dire predictions that we were splitting the unsplittable and would soon expire outside ASHA’s protective embrace. Just now it is the revolution in managed care. Bid a fond farewell, we are told, to health services as we know them. Prepare for a world in which mean-spirited accountants will dictate all policies and procedures.

Amid these lugubrious predictions, it is comforting to read the results of Fred Martin’s latest poll of audiologists. In this issue of JAAA, Martin and coauthors Champlin and Streetman report that audiologists are, in general, reasonably satisfied with their jobs. On a 5-point scale, overall satisfaction for all settings was 3.94, a result hardly consistent with the remorseless crumbling of professional morale. Interestingly, audiologists in private practice yielded the highest satisfaction ratings (4.30), while audiologists in state agencies gave the lowest ratings (2.67). That private practice continues to grow, and is so well regarded by its practitioners, is, I think, a very hopeful sign of increasingly strong professional growth. Martin et al studied five categories of statements potentially predictive of overall job satisfaction. Of six statements significantly correlated with job satisfaction three concerned the challenging nature of the work. Since this is what brought me into the field in the early 1950s I was heartened to see that challenge is still an important dimension driving our profession. Give your day a lift by reading this interesting paper.

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