

[Edward M. Schwarz, PhD](#), Richard and Margaret Burton Distinguished Professor in Orthopaedics and Director of the Center for Musculoskeletal Research, has been named Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal of Orthopaedic Research*, the most impactful journal worldwide for basic and translational orthopaedic research.

Schwarz will begin his 5-year leadership term in March 2024. He has been an associate editor of the journal for the past 10 years and serves as associate editor on two other musculoskeletal research journals.

The *Journal of Orthopaedic Research* is a publication of the Chicago-based, 3200-member Orthopaedic Research Society, the only international research society focused on orthopaedics and musculoskeletal care. It publishes 20 to 30 papers monthly.

Selection of the editorship is a competitive process; Schwarz, who has been an ORS member since 1999, was selected to lead the journal's growth in volume of published research and its impact over the next half-decade. Central to those aims will be expanding the number and quality of ORS members' peer reviews.

"You have to have a vision, a business plan on how to move the journal forward," Schwarz said. "My passion has been addressing the 'pandemic' in academic publishing – the fact that too few academics will review papers anymore."

Recalling a time when papers were FedExed hard-copy to researchers with a cover letter from a journal editor-in-chief requesting their contribution as a peer reviewer, Schwarz noted that "No one *dared* send back the paper without reviewing it." The proliferation of electronic-only journals has meant more competition for peer reviews and an aspect of anonymity in the process; Schwarz will focus on incentivizing ORS members to recognize the obligation and benefits of participation.

Unpublished papers are a missed opportunity for authors and a loss for academic research, Schwarz said. "I've been associate editor for two areas of the journal for the past 10 years; one being musculoskeletal infection, which does quite well in terms of peer reviews. The other is musculoskeletal tumor; over the past decade, we have had to reject 70 percent of the submissions because no one would review the papers. Potentially, one of those papers could have uncovered a cure for cancer."

Schwarz's other strategic priorities will be supporting International Consensus Meetings (ICMs) by the society's section and research interest groups, and publishing very-high impact JOR consensus articles from those meetings. Focusing the world's foremost researchers on highest-priority research

areas can advance research and clinical care paradigms, and enhance the quality and impact of research from ORS members, Schwarz said.

He pointed to the success of a 2018 [ICM focused on bone infection research](#), which spurred advances in clinical care approaches that had been unchanged for five decades.

Regarding bone infection associated with total joint replacement, Schwarz said, “We hadn’t changed anything. The incidence of infection and outcomes had persisted since the 1970s; the only thing that changed was lack of reimbursement and punitive damages for these infections, which drove the need for changes in clinical policy. That catalyzed our research toward establishing a scientific basis for risk factors for bone infection (e.g. obesity). We always knew it, but didn’t have the established science to support it. At the ICM, surgeons from all over the world agreed that the pre-surgical protocols had to change and patients had to be optimized before elective surgery. That led to protocols for diabetes control, smoking cessation, weight loss and so forth that are now the standard.”

“Identifying the technologies that don’t work, such as antibiotic bone cement to deter infection, has to be done as a consensus of thought leaders – basic scientists, orthopaedic surgeons and infectious disease specialists have to come together as a group and agree on the science. What do we know, what do we know we *don’t* know – those have to be the focus on our research. As Editor-in-Chief, I want to see other areas of Orthopaedics develop International Consensus Meetings and resulting articles published in the journal.”