

Editorial

Continuity and Innovation in Pediatric Allergy & Immunology

We are aware of undertaking a huge new responsibility in accepting the offer of the European Academy of Allergy and Clinical Immunology (EAACI) to become Editor-in-Chief and Managing Editor of *Pediatric Allergy and Immunology* (PAI). Since its first issue in 1990, PAI has made a fundamental contribution as a truly unique journal focused specifically on childhood allergies and other immune-mediated diseases. Bengt Björkstén – PAI founding Editor – envisaged a journal of interest for clinicians and researchers. In his first editorial, co-signed with Hugh Sampson, Bengt encouraged ‘the basic scientist to publish original findings, suggesting questions to the clinician for him to try to answer in the clinic’ as well as prompting clinicians ‘to communicate findings that raise interesting questions that can be further elaborated on and hopefully answered in the laboratory’ (1). He saw this cooperation between clinicians and researchers as an essential ‘effort to enhance the interaction between different disciplines’. It was this vision that John and Jill Warner continued to pursue (2), with a great deal of assistance from a strong team of associate editors and reviewers.

John and Jill took over Bengt’s work and were able to expand the journal well beyond European borders, making it really global: PAI is today an important journal in Eastern Asia and in South America as well as in Europe. It is under the Warners’ leadership that manuscript submissions and PAI’s scientific impact factor have tremendously increased, so that PAI now ranks among the most important journals in the areas of Allergy and Pediatrics, respectively. John has brought to this enterprise an incredible set of new ideas: never flagging before controversy, in 11 yrs he signed 42 (!) editorials which form a ‘Summa Allergologica’ of primary scientific and political interest. John’s editorials contain indeed not only intelligent and highly innovative concepts but quite often extremely provocative statements capable of awakening discussion on present para-

doxes (3–7) as well as launching new visions for the future (8).

We would like to pay homage to Bengt and John for their masterful job of steering the Journal’s ship toward success. The Journal has clearly improved tremendously during the years of Björkstén’s and the Warners’ leadership, and it is a big challenge to take over the position. We look forward to carrying on their tradition of excellence. To this end, we have again assembled an impressive editorial board and an extraordinary group of associate editors who have pledged to bring PAI to even greater heights. On behalf of the Journal and the Academy, we thank the departing editors and editorial board members for their dedication.

You may also notice a different look to the Journal, which is now similar to *Allergy*. The EAACI decided that its official Journals, PAI and *Allergy*, will have equal relevance, format, internal structure and publication rules. This policy implies also that any manuscript specifically dealing with pediatric age should be preferentially submitted to PAI and not to *Allergy*.

We have inherited a rather long list of accepted manuscripts waiting for publication, a seeming consequence of the tremendous increase in the number of submitted papers during the last phase of the Warners’ mandate. To ‘wash-out’ this waiting list, in addition to the online issues already published in February and March under Warners’ leadership, we shall have to publish additional online issues during 2010. A regular manuscript flow and publication will only then be reinstated in 2011. An unfortunate ‘bystander’ effect of these extra-issues published online will be a sharp increase of papers published in 2010 (from the normal average of 100/yr to a peak of about 200 in 2010 only). This will create a decline of the journal’s impact factor for years 2010 and 2011. This trend will then be reversed only in 2012.

Authors will also note that to speed-up the reviewing process, we shall allow ourselves only 1 wk to reach a first decision and 2 wks for reviewers to submit their comments to the editorial team. We shall try our best to keep the reviewing process extremely fast, in parallel with the standards of other journals ranking higher in the fields of Allergy or Pediatrics.

The Journal will be divided into sections roughly corresponding to the areas of expertise of the associate editors. Each section will appear with 2–4 articles on alternate issues, thus providing an alternate but regular structure to the table of contents of each issue. One or two reviews and one or two editorials will appear in most issues. In line with the editorial choice of our predecessors (9), we shall continue to avoid publication of full or short papers containing only case reports. Also, in agreement with the policy of other major medical journals, from 2012, we shall publish new articles reporting the results of trials only if they have been regularly registered. In this regard, it is important to highlight that WHO has concluded that registration of interventional trials is a scientific, ethical and moral responsibility.

We shall promote as much as possible new areas of investigation, such as epigenetics of allergic diseases, allergen-specific and non-specific tolerance induction, molecular allergology, biologic-based therapies and innovative informatics. Last but not least, we shall try to promote communication in the area of Public Health, with a focus on new strategies to implement the international guidelines in the daily practice.

One of our targets is to rapidly increase the number of pages in the Journal with a view to publishing more issues per year in the years to come. We shall continue to publish at least two supplements every year and to host position papers and international guidelines whenever possible, in close cooperation with the Clement von Pirquet Foundation. We feel that a specific mandate of PAI is to express the official positions of the EAACI in the area of childhood allergies and immune diseases. In addition, one or two pages in most issues will be dedicated to the EAACI Pediatric Section.

During 2010, we shall launch a new initiative whose target is to strengthen the link between the community of European pediatric allergist & immunologists and PAI and to increase the number of good manuscripts submitted to the

Journal. We shall promote a new idea of PAI, conceived as a 'super-national' Journal, strongly linked not only to the EAACI but also to the national journals and to the national societies. An editorial will be devoted to present the details of this 'PAI for Europe, Europe for PAI' initiative, which will begin with the first issue of 2011. At the same time, we shall continue John Warner's strategy to disseminate the Journal outside Europe. The inclusion among the section editors of two outstanding experts from the USA and Australia is our first step in this direction.

Medical publishing is made possible by the interest of hard-working and enthusiastic authors and the contributions of reviewers who voluntarily assist the editorial team. We thank in advance all of these contributors and acknowledge their efforts. Now, as 20 yrs ago, we can conclude with the words used by Bengt Bjorksten and Hugh Sampson in PAI's first editorial: 'the future of Pediatric Allergy and Immunology now mainly depends on how well it is perceived by the readers and by the various research groups'.

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