



## EDITORIAL

# Your 10,000 manuscripts

**K.F. Rabe\* and P.J. Sterk#**

**A**fter 6 years in office, we are finishing our mandate as Chief Editors of the *European Respiratory Journal (ERJ)*. It has been a great honour and pleasure to serve the journal, the European Respiratory Society, and... you!

Based on undergraduate management knowledge, we started with the mission: "rapid, reliable and responsive". Has that been achieved? Well, regarding the central part of our mission, we have tried our utmost to guarantee the reliability of both the *ERJ* and the data published. Is the *ERJ* responsive? Over the years, we have stimulated the usage of the *ERJ* as a platform for debate on the latest issues in respiratory science, through editorials, perspective papers, and our correspondence section. We hope you liked it. And were we rapid? Our *ERJ* In Press service (<http://erj.ersjournals.com/pap.dtl>) has indeed increased the early access to accepted papers. But, to be honest, we believe that there is still some room for improvement with regard to the speed of the reviewing and editorial procedures.

We feel grateful that you have entrusted 10,041 manuscripts with us during our Chief Editorship of the past 6 years. Only 1 in 6 made it to a publication. Think about it: each of these submissions representing an awful lot of scientific work and, altogether, more than 100,000 carefully written pages by struggling and sweating first authors. We were fully aware of the responsibility of deciding upon the fate of these products of the pen, by making both a negative and a positive selection. Did all papers receive a fair decision? We tried to ensure this but must have failed occasionally. When authors questioned our decisions, we sincerely examined their cases and responded to their doubts. But running an editorial office is human work, and decisions are hardly ever "black and white". Let us put it this way: we estimate that the probability of a false-positive decision (acceptance of a paper that may not have been suitable for publication) was around 0.05; a very acceptable cut-off in science. Alternatively, the probability of a false-negative decision (rejection of a paper that was worth publishing) must have been around 0.10, leaving sufficient "power" for the *ERJ* as a player in the field.

Who has helped in this? First, there is no *ERJ* without the staff of the ERS Publications Office in Sheffield (UK). That is, Elin Reeves, Linda Arnold and Rachel White, and their highly professional team with regard to scientific publication:

Gill Archer, Kay Sharpe, Alyson Adam, Fiona Marks, Claire Turner, Lee Dodd, Matt Broadhead, Neil Bullen, Pippa Powell, Micah Clayton, Veronica Pock, Claire Ryan, David Sadler, Catherine Moore, Sarah McKee, Joanne Abdy and Fiona Shepherd. We express our gratitude for the level of quality that they put into the journal and their assistance to the Editorial Board. We also thank Anneke van der Mey, Monica Vonk and Cindy Roelen for their constant guidance of the two captains of the Board.

The members of the Editorial Board have prepared, made and discussed 10,041 decisions, based on recommendations by hundreds of our almost anonymous expert reviewers, who are listed at: <http://erj.ersjournals.com/misc/reviewers.shtml>. This intensive interaction has determined the quality and flavour of the *ERJ*. So who were they, the *ERJ* Editors? You can find them on the first page of the Journal and at: <http://erj.ersjournals.com/misc/edboard.shtml>. What a team! Brave colleagues, who were running the risk of losing a friend or two after taking painful decisions. Now all their mandates have ended, we can tell you who they really were. We had all kind of phenotypes in our population of Editors. The omnivores, such as Claus Vogelmeier, Nico Ambrosino, Roberto Rodriguez-Roisin, Leo Fabbri, Steve Spiro, Toni Torres, Jorrit Gerritsen, Mark Woodhead, Ramon Farré and Tobias Welte. The methodological experts: Alexander Bankier, Allan Hackshaw, David Lawrence and Samy Suissa. The super scientists: Alan Leff, Maria Belvisi, Mark Inman and Marina Saetta. The number crunchers: Dennis Nowak, Joan Soriano, Thomas Sandström, Charlotte Suppli Ulrik, Debbie Meyers and Jordi Sunyer. The deep diggers: Ratko Djukanovic, Annemie Schols, Urs Frey, Joachim Müller-Quernheim, Pascal Chanez, Cristina Mapp, Peter Le Souëf and Santiago Ewig. The very efficient professionals: Ganesh Raghu, Monica Kraft, Mike Polkey, Peter Gibson, Marius Hoepfer, Susanna von Essen, Christian Brambilla, Spyros Zakyntinos, Gilbert Massard, Frederic Sériès, Yoshinosuke Fukuchi, Jan Hedner, and Kevin Webb. And a special category for the hungriest of all: Giovanni Battista Migliori.

We were also fortunate to have Anh Tuan Dinh-Xuan in our team. He and Vito Brusasco will be your new Chief Editors! They will further push and improve the *ERJ*. We wish them as much joy as we had.

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STATEMENT OF INTEREST: None declared.

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