The ERJ two years later

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The European Respiratory Journal (ERJ) now enters its sixth year of publication, and its third year as official journal of the European Respiratory Society (ERS). Two years ago we presented a programme [1] to establish the ERJ as a leading journal covering all aspects of respiratory medicine and science, and serving as a platform for scientific interchange between the members of the growing community of physicians and researchers with interest in pulmonary medicine in Europe and abroad. It seems appropriate to review the progress made in reaching these goals.

The journal continues to strive hard to publish good original contributions related to both experimental and clinical research, as well as instructive clinical observations. We wish to maintain a good balance between both types of manuscript, to retain the interest of both the basic researcher and the clinician. We appreciate how still more authors from all over the world allow us to review their best work for publication. We expect to receive 30% more manuscripts in 1992 than two years ago. Despite this higher workload our Associate Editors and numerous anonymous reviewers have managed to significantly reduce the mean "verdict time" between receipt of manuscripts and either notification of rejection or request for revision.

In order to assist authors as much as possible in writing up their work, we have revised our Instructions to authors published in the back of each issue. For research papers, we now emphasise the need to state clearly the question they are intending to answer, as well as its answer. We are grateful to Mrs Mimi Zeiger for her valuable cooperation in revising these instructions, and we warmly recommend her recent book for further instructive and enjoyable reading [2].

In its strive for excellence our Editorial Board has remained selective, with only 37% of all manuscripts submitted in 1991 accepted for publication. However, we trust that despite their disappointment many authors of rejected manuscripts will appreciate the educational value of a thorough and critical review of their work, and will want to try even harder another time. To cope with the increased number of accepted manuscripts, our Management Board has fortunately agreed to publish still more pages in 1993 with no increase in cost to ERS members.

To better reflect the scientific life of the Society, our journal will publish statements prepared by the Scientific bodies of the ERS. We have already published the protocol of a large-scale study undertaken by the ERS in a recent issue [3], and will publish other very valuable official documents approved by the Society in the near future. We also expect to co-publish soon with the American Review of Respiratory Diseases a statement prepared by a joint committee of ATS and ERS members. Another feature of our strengthening ties with our American sister journals is the intention of Dr Alfred Soffer, Chief Editor of Chest, to publish selected abstracts from the ERJ in this reputed publication, starting from this month. We welcome these expressions of transatlantic cooperation, and hope it will continue and expand to the benefit of our readers and of the international scientific community.

One of our targets was to add more attractive features to the journal. Recent issues have had at least three Editorials, and many more are being prepared. Mainly derived from high-standard lectures or symposia at the Annual ERS Congresses, we are publishing still more Reviews and Review Series. We are devoting more space for the publication of international consensus documents of immediate clinical or research interest. We also collect and publish reports on other quality meetings and trust that our readers appreciate this "hot news"; we therefore keep insisting on such information being published soon enough after the meeting.

Finally most issues still have "Case for Diagnosis"; we hope that about half of our readers are able to guess the diagnosis before turning the page.

In the near future we intend to open a section on "Rapid Publications". A more formal announcement appears in this issue [4]. In order to stimulate the publication of papers on certain topics, we are to open Subspecialist Sections, in which a number of manuscripts on the same topic are assembled. Possible first candidates for such topics are Pulmonary Rehabilitation and Thoracic Surgery; to stimulate life in these fields and to recruit manuscripts, we are appointing new specialised Editors. We hope that response will follow.

Two years ago the ERJ cordially greeted its sister journal, the European Respiratory Review (ERR). Younger sister has been doing very well indeed by already publishing ten issues with interesting reports and conference proceedings, mostly of direct clinical interest. To stress the relation between both journals, the ERJ usually publishes an editorial commenting on the merits of the accompanying ERR issue.
The first Chief Editor of the ERR, Jean-Claude Yernault, has decided to resign to concentrate his efforts on the challenging and much needed creation of a medium for postgraduate teaching of Respiratory Medicine in Europe. We warmly welcome the new Chief Editor, Leo Fabbri, and have no doubt that with his competence, creativity, and dynamism the ERR will further flourish.

From this year, the Editorial Board of the ERJ will undergo many changes. After a completion of their five-year terms, Nils Blomqvist, Gérard Huchon, Gerhard Sybrect and Eero Tala are leaving the Board, as will Alain Harf and Lauri Laitinen. We very much thank them for their work. They are being replaced by 13 new Associate Editors, whose names as reputed experts are surely well known to most readers. To ensure better statistical evaluation of research papers, we are appointing new statistical editors; we are grateful for their commitment in helping other Board members in this important task. Ulrich Costabel will continue to cooperate in the final editing of accepted manuscripts and in the general scientific management, but will now be joined by Peter Sterk. The further active involvement of both in the editorial work will surely strengthen the journal, as will the hard work since early 1992 of Celia Emery, the Technical Editor in the Sheffield Office.

Finally, after 20 years of outstanding and relentless work as Chief Editor of three generations of European journals, and for both of us after 14 years of close cooperation, Erik Berglund has resigned from the Board at the end of 1992. He is and remains a great teacher in medical scientific writing, having helped numerous authors to improve their manuscripts, even at times rewriting them completely himself. His considerable editorial expertise and experience, coupled with his great interest and warm friendship, will be very much missed in the daily running of the journal, but we trust that we can still unceasingly call on him for help and advice. The ERJ and European Respiratory Medicine owe him much gratitude.

References