

## Changes

*"There is nothing wrong in change, if it is in the right direction. To improve is to change, so to be perfect is to have changed often."*

Winston Churchill, 1924

In the business of scientific publishing, change is essential, unavoidable, and potentially disruptive. And of course, the trick is that it needs to be in the "right direction." When we assumed editorial responsibility for this Journal one year ago, the most immediate change we undertook was to make it easier to submit manuscripts to us. This is especially important since many journals, including our own, decline the majority of submitted papers without outside review. Accordingly, we initiated a "format-free" initial submission policy such that – provided a manuscript has all the required material – the authors do not have to format it specifically for our journal. We also spent quite a few hours undertaking mock manuscript submissions through our web site to identify all the "pain points" that could be eliminated or at least greatly reduced – and we welcome input on how to make this process even more streamlined! Some additional changes that have proved popular with authors include printing the given names of authors (not just initials), removing the restriction on the number of authors on regular papers, removing the restriction on co-first or co-senior (corresponding) authors, raising the word count for regular articles from 4000 to 5000 words, and making color images free.

Another priority we have focused on during this first year of our editorship has been the pursuit of increased diversity in various aspects of the journal's life cycle. There is very good evidence that the process of scientific publishing is dominated by certain demographic groups and that women and individuals from particular geographical locations are significantly underrepresented in the literature. This is a longstanding concern and pervades every aspect of the publication process from the investigators submitting studies for evaluation, to the reviewers and composition of editorial teams that handle the manuscripts and make final decisions on publication.

In response to this concern, during this first year of our editorship we have incorporated the principle of diversity into several of our decisions relating to the renewal of key members of the editorial team. The terms of five of our existing Associate Editors came to an end in 2019 and we have replaced these individuals with clinicians

and scientists who not only have the required subject matter expertise but also address the principles of gender and geographical diversity. Furthermore, in an effort to provide an added clinical focus for the journal we have also appointed a new Associate Editor (Jean Connors) to develop a series of articles focused on how to treat specific clinical conditions.

Lastly, we have also addressed the issue of diversity with reference to the form of media through which the journal communicates to its readership. Twitter has established a growing reputation for the dissemination of knowledge in scientific fields such as ours and thus the appointment of a new Social Media Associate Editor (Dianne van der Wal) has also been added to the editorial team complement. There is already evidence that this appointment and its associated activity in the Twittersphere has generated significant interest in the contents of the journal.

As we move ahead with further changes to the journal, we will consistently maintain the principle of diversity as an essential element of all decisions. Wherever possible, we will ensure that process of manuscript reviewing is undertaken by content experts from a wide range of demographics, and we will continue to look for ways in which we can further diversify the editorial team. Lastly, the journal has a large Editorial Board that lacks a formally prescribed role in the journal's life cycle. During the year ahead, we plan to revisit the issue of the Editorial Board, to expand its diversity and to more explicitly define its role for the enhancement of the journal's impact and reputation.

We are always available for comments and suggestions concerning the issue of diversity as it pertains to the journal, and welcome innovative proposals for enabling our goals for diversification.

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