

A Message from the Editor

THIS IS the 15th anniversary of the creation of the *European Journal of Cancer* and if our Publisher succeeds in inserting this message in the June number of the Journal, the degree of precision of this message in marking the anniversary will be unusually great since our first number appeared in June 1965.

SOME DATA

Three years have elapsed since we published our first message from the Editor and our readers are referred to the *European Journal of Cancer*, Vol. 13, p. 785, 1977, for a comparison of the data on submitted and published articles. In the last 3 yr, the number of submitted manuscripts has continued to increase and more rapidly than before (Fig. 1 and Table 1). The number of published manuscripts has increased also but at a slower rate.

Submitted manuscripts rose from 325 in 1977 to 399 in 1979 while published manuscripts rose from 171 to 188 for the same years. In these last 3 yr, the number of rejections amounted to almost 50% of the submitted manuscripts, a rate not very different from that observed during the preceeding 12 yr.

Where do these manuscripts come from? The answer is given in Table 2 and Fig. 2: they come from 28 countries. The United Kingdom maintains the lead it showed in previous years, closely followed by the United States. Thereafter are listed five countries of Western Europe with sizable contributions, followed by Japan, Sweden and Canada. The other countries are less represented. In all, 28 countries have contributed 540 accepted manuscripts, of which 411 come from seven countries represented by six European countries and the United States. It may not be fair to compare the United States contribution with the smaller coun-

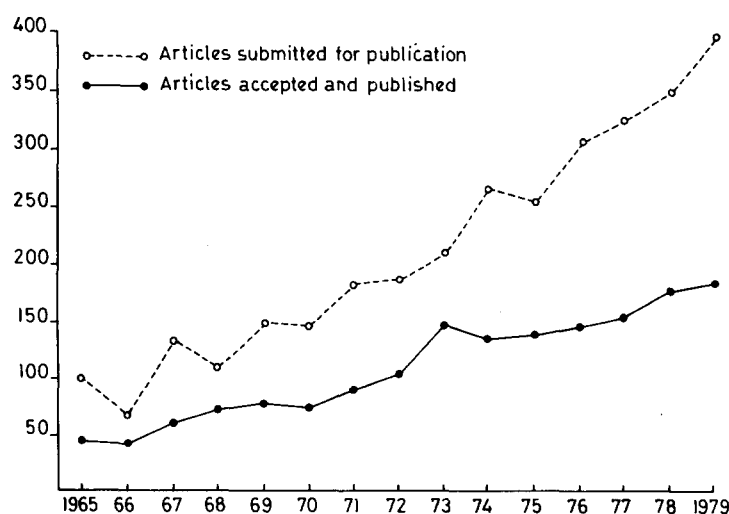


Fig. 1. Numbers of articles submitted and accepted for publication in the *European Journal of Cancer*, 1965-1979.

Table 1. *European Journal of Cancer*—submitted and published manuscripts

Year	Manuscripts submitted for publication	Manuscripts accepted and published	Manuscripts published (number of pages)
1977	325	171	1464
1978	350	181	1408
1979	399	188	1524
Total	1074	540	4396

Table 2. *European Journal of Cancer* manuscripts published from 1977 through 1979

United Kingdom	124
United States of America	95
Belgium	44
France	42
The Netherlands	38
Federal Republic of Germany	35
Italy	33
Japan	16
Sweden	15
Canada	14
Israel	9
Australia	7
India	7
Denmark	7
Switzerland	7
Hungary	6
Ireland	6
Yugoslavia	5
Spain	5
Norway	4
Egypt	4
German Democratic Republic	4
Czechoslovakia	3
U.S.S.R.	3
Austria	3
Poland	2
Bulgaria	1
Republic of South Africa	1
Total	540

tries of Western Europe. If we group the five best contributors of Western Europe, representing approximately a population of 200 million as against 220 million for the U.S., their combined contribution amounts to 192 articles, thus definitely exceeding the U.S. This European predominance becomes overwhelming if the United Kingdom articles are added to the European continental contribution. All this indicates that the *European Journal of Cancer* is an international journal justifying its name as a publisher of predominantly European contributions to cancer research, although it is and remains open to contributors from everywhere in the world. Countries in Europe outside of the European Community (E.C.) have a smaller participation in the total number of publications and it is clear for many of these that their preference goes to publication in national or American journals. For

other countries, the small number of articles probably reflects a lesser production.

A DISCUSSION

As I said in 1977, the American scientific periodicals remain a formidable attractive force for manuscripts of good quality from all countries in the world. In addition, the United States of America has been for half a century and remains the most important contributor to the world scientific literature on laboratory and clinical cancer research. This seems to be also true for the scientific literature in general (see Daniel S. Greenberg's Washington Report: the *New England Journal of Medicine* 301, 1455, 1979). However, our short discussion will be based exclusively on publications on cancer. For purposes of comparison, we have in this office carried out a limited survey of five cancer journals and have selected three United States journals (*Cancer*, *Cancer Research* and *Cancer Treatment Reports*), the *International Journal of Cancer* and the *European Journal of Cancer*. The selection of the three American journals is somewhat arbitrary: there are other equally good cancer journals in the United States. Furthermore, non-cancer journals publish an increasing number of articles on cancer. We could not of course review all journals and our selection is somewhat justified by the diverse characters of the three American journals: *Cancer Research* with a majority of research articles, *Cancer* with a majority of clinical reports, *Cancer Treatment Reports* publishing almost exclusively clinical investigation on treatment. Outside of the United States, we have chosen the *International Journal of Cancer* because it is international, and the *European Journal of Cancer* because it is European.

Whether one regrets it or not it seems impossible to deny that at the present, the results of world cancer research in the broad sense are overwhelmingly published in the English language. The vast majority of the significant world contributions in cancer research appear in American journals. With the possible exception of the *British Journal of Cancer*, relatively little original high level cancer research is published in national journals outside of America. There are of course numerous exceptions to this general rule, and excellent, first rate discoveries in cancer research are occasionally published in all journals. Yet I think the general rule remains and obtains in biological research and even more strikingly in clinical investigation in cancer.

If we now examine the number of publications from the E.C. countries individually and together in the five arbitrarily selected cancer journals, we discover that the E.C. contribution amounts to

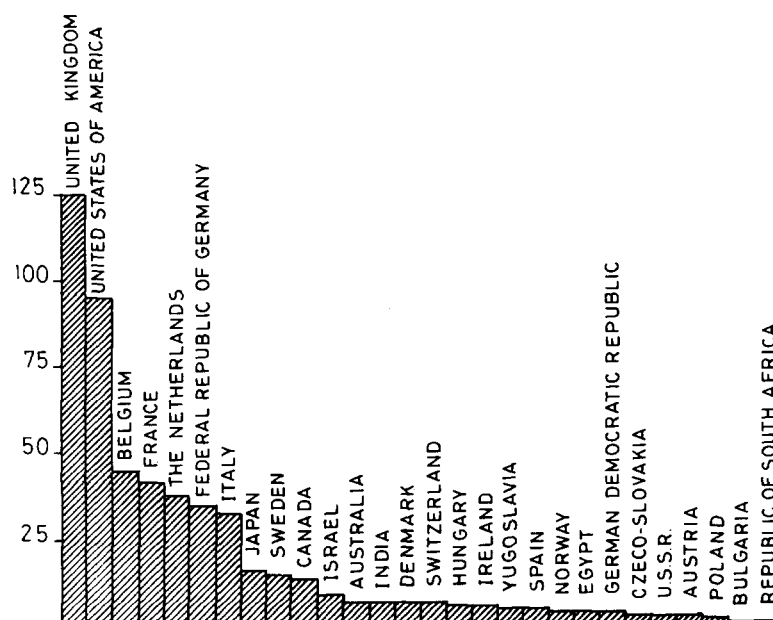


Fig. 2. Countries of origin of articles published in the *European Journal of Cancer*, 1977-1979.

20% of the total or one fourth of the U.S. contribution. Looking now at individual journals, the highest percentage of E.C. contribution is 82 and 43%, respectively for the *European Journal of Cancer* and the *International Journal of Cancer*, creating a fleeting false impression of the comparative weight of European cancer research. However, the imbalance becomes evident when the comparison is made on the total number of articles in the five journals: 20% originate from the European Community as against 80% from the U.S. (Tables 3 and 4).

Table 3. *Cancer, Cancer Research, Cancer Treatment Reports, International Journal of Cancer and European Journal of Cancer*, 1977-1979

	Number of articles published	Percentage
U.S.A.	3996	80%
E.C.	1016 (G.B. : 296)	20% (6%)
Total	5012	

Table 4. *Distribution of published articles—1977-1979*

Journal	Countries	Number of articles	Percentage
International Journal of Cancer	U.S.A.	232	57%
	E.C.	173 (62)*	43% (15%)*
European Journal of Cancer	U.S.A.	95	18%
	E.C.	445 (124)*	82% (23%)*
Cancer	U.S.A.	1294	91%
	E.C.	134 (49)*	9% (3%)*
Cancer Treatment Reports	U.S.A.	641	90%
	E.C.	73 (19)*	10% (3%)*
Cancer Research	U.S.A.	1734	90%
	E.C.	191 (42)*	10% (2%)*

*Numbers between brackets are for Great Britain as part of E.C.

Admittedly, this is a very incomplete survey of the literature on cancer research and it is not excluded that the study of a larger number of journals would give different results. However, this is not our impression and we think that the proportion reported here fairly represents a general phenomenon. The interpretation of these data is fraught with great uncertainty: they seem to mean that the majority of high quality articles on cancer are published in American journals, *wherever the work is carried out in the world*. If so, could this indicate also that as far as cancer research is concerned, the contribution of the E.C., evaluated by the number of publications, represents one fourth of the U.S. research production? There are of course other ways of evaluating the comparative weight of cancer research in different countries: quality could be opposed to quantity as a method of evaluation; originality could be invoked also. I am not sure that these considerations would alter what I think is the conclusion of our limited survey. Certainly, these data and our tentative discussion,

despite their fragmentary nature raise important questions for the future of cancer research in Europe. It is my hope that a more complete survey taking into consideration more journals and perhaps other factors (such as for instance the General Accounting Office's Science Indicators) will be forthcoming from responsible authorities of the E.C. But as of now, these data, in our opinion, are sufficient justification for the existence of the *European Journal of Cancer* and should be taken as a warning to the European scientific community.

The journal is greatly indebted to the referees who accepted to read and evaluate manuscripts. Most of them suggested corrections and improvements for which the Editor and the Authors were equally grateful. The list of referees is found in this issue. Our thanks go to the Editorial Board also. Finally, Miss Leroy, Technical Editor and Pergamon Press have continued to assist us expertly in our continued expansion. Mrs. Stift is responsible for assembling the data on which the discussion of this message is based.

H. J. TAGNON, M.D., F.A.C.P.

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