

Editorial Communication

What's in a name?

SIXTEEN years ago, when the Journal issued its first number, the policy it advocated was expressed in simple terms: to publish original work on oncology. Under this term, there were listed a number of disciplines from chemistry to genetics. At the end of the list appeared "and clinical medicine".

The European Journal of Cancer today completes its name by the addition of "and Clinical Oncology". This, of course, does not mean that the general policy of the journal has changed. What the policy was sixteen years ago is still the policy today. The reason for completing the title by this emphasis on clinical oncology is that clinical research is perhaps the neglected child of cancer research in Europe. The Editorial Office receives a relatively low number of high-grade clinical articles. The number is low relative not only to articles on the other subjects pertinent to oncology but also to the abundance of first rate clinical articles in the United States literature.

There is some reason for concern in this paucity of good clinical publications; however, there are outstanding exceptions and first rate clinical articles are published under the auspices of the European Organization for Research on Treatment of Cancer, the British MRC, the Swiss clinical groups and by individual clinicians or teams of clinicians. By and large, Western Europe lags behind America in published clinical research. The university professor, the hospital administrator, and perhaps the sociologist, should wonder about this deficiency and attempt to trace its origin. This could be indicative of a certain weakness in the European medical system such as an unconscious reluctance to introducing the scientific method in the evaluation of medical treatment, or perhaps a misunderstanding of the ethical obligation to advance medical science at the bedside as well as in the laboratory. These are hypotheses and there may be other simpler causes; for instance, having to do with the staffing and financing of medical research. But more importantly, there is the lack of a true *European* program of cancer research with vision and generosity in the administration of the European Community, which has obvious health responsibilities and should improve its image by its concern for the health of the people.

Be as it may, this is what there is in a name.* The journal wishes to encourage and, by its editorial policy, support clinical oncology, good clinical research in cancer, not in competition with or to the detriment of biological bench research, but as the indispensable complement to any type of research whose ultimate aim is to cure disease. Therefore, the Journal extends a renewed invitation to clinical investigators to submit their manuscripts. We will be happy to publish them.

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Editor.

*"What's in a name? That which we call a rose/By any other name would smell as sweet". (From Shakespeare: *Romeo and Juliet*).