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# Metabolism

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## Editorials

# One year of changes for *Metabolism, Clinical and Experimental*: evolution and intelligent design at work

July 2011 marked the completion of 1 year of my being Editor-in-Chief, at the helm of *Metabolism, Clinical and Experimental*. Over the past year, many of our readers have observed a number of enhancements in the journal that have generated positive comments. We encourage those who have not yet noticed these new features to check them out. Several innovations have materialized during this past year, some in the context of a much-needed evolution in response to the electronic and information technology that is changing so many aspects of our personal and professional lives, whereas others may hopefully reflect what one could call intelligent design. I would like to take this time to provide an update for our authors, reviewers, and readers.

Since last year, we have consolidated our editorial offices, using experienced personnel based in Oxford, England, where the Elsevier headquarters is located. Joe Hodgkinson is our new editorial assistant, and Joe Frankland is our new editorial manager. I have already selected and appointed 3 new associate editors all based at Harvard Medical School: Dr Young-Bum Kim, PhD, who will be primarily responsible for basic research papers; Dr Catherine Gordon, MD, who will be primarily responsible for papers to do with bone metabolism and pediatrics; and Dr Jonathan Williams, who will be primarily responsible for papers in the areas of genetics, hypertension, and adrenals. We are planning to appoint a fourth associate editor later this year to complete the editorial group that will be leading the journal during the next few years.

I and my associate editors are assisted by a new, renowned editorial board led by 3 preeminent senior editorial board members. Together, they bring years of distinguished service to the field as well as immense editorial experience that will help the journal tremendously as we move to the next decade. We also have selected and registered several hundreds of dedicated reviewers who are helping us screen and improve the quality of the papers we receive.

Our journal, which this past year celebrated its 60th anniversary, that is, a remarkably long and distinguished history of important contributions to the field of metabolism, now has a completely new look. The cover has been modified to relay information about the new and expanded direction of the journal, while preserving the format and color schema to

convey continuity and tradition. We have changed how manuscripts are organized in publication by grouping them into editorials, reviews, and basic, translational, and clinical papers. We are including at least one companion editorial [1,2], commentary, or review [3,4] of important topics to complement the original articles published. We have also instituted a new, easier-to-read format for our papers. A new fast-track system has been initiated to emphasize novel and groundbreaking manuscripts. Finally, we have introduced a “brief report” category [5,6] for appropriately concise findings that do not require full-length publication [7,8]. In contrast, letters will be published online only.

Importantly, we have completely moved away from paper submissions and instituted a new, entirely computerized system for manuscript submission and handling, in conjunction with a newly updated Web site with information on the journal and organized instructions for authors. We believe that this will greatly facilitate submission of high-quality papers while expediting the review process. We are beginning to see the fruits of this hard work. Both the quantity and quality of our papers and our statistics with respect to time to review and publish have improved dramatically. Our mean time from submission to first notification has been shortened dramatically to 2.5 weeks for papers submitted in 2011, and our mean time from submission to final disposition has been shortened to 7.2 weeks. Our current rejection rate is 76%, which compares favorably with the leading journals in the field; and our rapid electronic publication system now places accepted papers online within a very short period. Credit for all these achievements must be attributed not only to the efficiency of our electronic rapid review system but mainly and primarily to our splendid editorial board and our committed reviewers, associate editors, and staff.

Furthermore, although impact factors are slow to change (often taking several years), we are confident that ours will be improving substantially in the not so distant future. Whereas our impact factor is currently in the 50% to 52% position for journals in the Endocrinology and Metabolism category, we are in a much better position in terms of metrics of direct interest to our authors; that is, we are in the top 5% in citation half-lives and the top 15% in total citations. More specifically,

the journal's average citation half-life is 8.8 years, signifying to authors that their papers continue to be cited for many years (only 50% of citations will be received within 8.8 years). As an author, it is comforting to know that although our papers published in *Metabolism, Clinical and Experimental* have, on average, been receiving 2.6 citations per year, they have continued to be collecting citations for so many years. This has led to much more total citations per paper, a metric that places our journal in the top 15% of journals in the category of Endocrinology and Metabolism.

We have also created a new functional and modern Web site where readers can find the latest information on the journal and scientists can access recently accepted papers, including a few highlighted every month. In addition, promoters can more easily access information on how to advertise in the journal. Interested parties can also find a list of the most downloaded papers and the top 10 most cited papers published in *Metabolism*. The Web site also provides a link to other useful Elsevier resources for authors, editors, reviewers, academics, and health practitioners. I would encourage all of you to explore the site.

I will soon be implementing several new ideas for the journal, including instituting an annual award for the best manuscript submitted by a young investigator. I will also implement a special recognition for high-quality/high-volume reviewers. You will be hearing more details about both initiatives very soon. My immediate plans also include putting together press releases highlighting information on important new publications to scientists and lay persons alike. In addition, we are planning to highlight a limited number of very important papers in an e-mail newsletter by the publisher of *The American Journal of Medicine* that covers the top publications in journals such as *The American Journal of Medicine*, *The American Journal of Cardiology*, and the *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology* and that is distributed to thousands of readers throughout the world.

In summary, *Metabolism, Clinical and Experimental* has a long and distinguished history of publishing landmark scientific work in the area of Metabolism. It is my personal commitment and that of the editorial board to continue improving the quality of our journal. I would also sincerely welcome input and ideas from our loyal readers, creative authors, and wise reviewers as we all work together to enhance the quality of

our journal and establish it as the premier scientific periodical for the publication in our scientific field.

Christos S. Mantzoros  
Harvard Medical School, Boston, MA 02215, USA  
E-mail address: [metabolism@elsevier.com](mailto:metabolism@elsevier.com)

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