

From the Editor-in-Chief

ALTHOUGH IT DOES NOT SEEM THAT LONG, THIS issue sees the end of the second volume of “Cardiology in the Young” published under the imprint of Cambridge University Press, as opposed to Greenwich Medical Media. I cannot deny that problems occurred during the period of change between our publishers, but hopefully these problems are all now resolved. I recently had the opportunity to visit the headquarters of Cambridge University Press. Their premises are large and impressive. The extensive section concerned with Journals is now under the direction of our old publisher, Geoffrey Nuttall. All that I was shown by Geoff and his colleagues envisages nothing but good things for the future. As we complete another year of publication, therefore, I see nothing but improvements ahead for all aspects of the Journal.

The first improvement is to be found in the tightening of our schedule for publication. As I explained in my last missive, this has meant that copy must be submitted well in advance, with the danger that some aspects may change between the time of writing and the time of publication. As I write this at the end of September, nonetheless, in preparation for publication in the December issue, already last week I had seen the advance copy of the October issue in its paper form. Our mailed copy arrived in our office this morning, and all the material is now available in electronic form on the Cambridge website (www.journals.cambridge.org/jid_CTY). Thus, for the first time, we have achieved our ambition of having our copy in the hands of our readers in advance of the month of publication. It is now incumbent on us to maintain these schedules, and they have been designed to achieve this goal. If we fail, then unless this is the consequence of unforeseen circumstances, the entire fault will be mine!

The second item that demands comment cannot be said to represent an improvement, since the service provided by our referees throughout our existence as a Journal, both those who are part of the Editorial Board and those who respond to my direct invitations, has been exemplary. We append to this message a list of all those not on the Board who have provided reviews over the past year. Almost all of these reviews have been submitted on time, with just a few tardy experts needing reminders. The majority of the referees have also permitted me to identify them to the authors of the work they have reviewed. I know that our

authors respond in very positive fashion when comments are passed on in non-anonymised fashion. It remains my firm belief that such non-anonymised exchanges improve the eventual standard of the manuscript under review. There are still some experts who prefer to retain their anonymity. When this is requested, I abide by their request. All things considered, nonetheless, I would urge those who, hopefully, will continue to referee in future to permit me to pass on their comments without the shield of anonymity. When commenting on the work of others, it is my belief that we should not write things on paper that we would be unwilling to state in person. Irrespective of such issues, which I recognise remain matters of personal preference, we could not produce the journal in efficient fashion, nor maintain our scientific standards, without the support of these referees. I thank them all – since I am well aware that they act on behalf of many other journals besides “Cardiology in the Young”. And I thank in particular those members of the Editorial Board who constantly answer my pleas for help.

A potential improvement that is pending from the stance of refereeing is that, very shortly, we will be transferring to an electronic system for receiving and handling our manuscripts. This is another consequence of the stewardship provided by Cambridge University Press. As all those are aware who have either submitted an article recently, or have refereed on our behalf, to date the handling of the manuscripts has been supervised in outstanding fashion by our Editorial Assistant, Felicity Gil. Felicity now makes sure that all the manuscripts are prepared in the fashion required by our “Instructions”, and then sends out the scripts in electronic format to the chosen experts. This system has worked remarkably well, and the Journal, as well as myself, owes a huge debt to Felicity. I am told by Cambridge University Press that it will be even better when we are computerised. I hope that this is the case, since Felicity has set remarkably high standards, and my own encounters with electronic systems have not always been positive. We cannot, however, ignore the progress made with electronic submission, so we will be moving to the new system early in the New Year. We will give more details when they become available, and these will also be shown on our website. We always encourage potential authors to study the “Instructions to Authors” before

they submit their manuscripts. With the electronic system in place, we hope to make it impossible for manuscripts to be entered unless they follow the "Instructions". Amongst these, the most important is to avoid the use of abbreviations and symbols.

The one disturbing piece of information that emerged from my discussions with our publishers in Cambridge is that, after a period of improvement, our impact factor has fallen over the past two years. We now languish with an impact factor of less than 0.5. I am at a loss to explain how this has come about, but the figures do not lie. From my position in the Editorial chair, the quality of papers received for publication has continued to rise. Furthermore, because of the number of papers received, we are now rejecting a greater proportion simply because we do not have the pages available to publish them all. We are also publishing reviews of the highest quality, which I am told are good for the purposes of increasing the impact factor. It would seem that potential authors are just not citing the works that we publish. In this respect, therefore, our impact is in your hands. The good news is that the number of submissions continues to rise, and that their quality remains remarkably high.

Hopefully in the near future our manuscripts will be more widely cited.

In closing yet another year of publication, therefore, all the portents are good. During this year, we have published several supplements. We are now working to make sure that the material in these supplements is also available electronically. We have further excellent supplements in the pipeline for publication early in 2006. They, too, will be available electronically. Our collaboration with the Association for European Paediatric Cardiology has been remarkably successful, and we will continue to bring news from Europe throughout 2006, and hopefully beyond. If it is possible, we would like to be able to extend our connections so that we can bring news on a regular basis from the rest of the World. From the outset, our ambition has been to become truly International. With the support of Cambridge University Press, we are now close to achieving our goal.

*Robert H. Anderson
Editor-in-Chief*

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