

Editorial

With this issue, I begin the final year of my term as Editor-in-Chief of the *Canadian Journal on Aging*. It seems an appropriate time to bring readers up to date on the submission and processing of manuscripts.

When I took over as Editor-in-Chief in October 2000, the backlog of accepted manuscripts awaiting publication posed a serious problem. With new funding from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research's Institute of Aging, the journal was able to expand in size and format. This expansion enabled us to reduce and, in fact, eliminate the backlog of accepted manuscripts awaiting publication. The journal has now reached its goal of ensuring manuscripts are published within 6 to 8 months of acceptance.

A corollary of this expansion is that the journal can accommodate more articles per issue and therefore needs more submissions than in the past. Efforts have been made over the past 2 years to achieve such an increase. An ideal submission rate would be about 90 to 100 manuscripts per year. While that goal has not yet been reached, the submission rate is moving steadily in that direction. Table 1 summarizes submissions, by section, for the past 3 years and shows an increase of about 10 manuscripts each year. In 2003, 70 unsolicited manuscripts were received and a further 35 were submitted for the 2 supplemental issues currently in progress. The submission rate is currently healthy, but readers are encouraged to submit their best scholarly work and to encourage their colleagues, in Canada and abroad, to do so.

Table 1: Unsolicited submissions 2001–2003, by section

	2001	2002	2003 ^a
Health Sciences	15	16	20
Psychological Sciences	9	13	15
Social Sciences	15	13	15
Social Policy & Practice	5	7	7
Educational Gerontology	0	0	0
Not sent for review	7	11	13
Total	51	60	70

a In addition to the unsolicited manuscripts noted in this table, a further 35 manuscripts were submitted for two supplemental issues.

All manuscripts are submitted to the Editor-in-Chief, who then sends them to the appropriate section editors. At the point of submission, the Editor-in-Chief sometimes decides that a manuscript will not be sent for peer review. As Table 1 shows, the number of manuscripts not sent for review has increased somewhat over the past 3 years, a trend which merits some comment. Occasionally, the topic of a manuscript is unrelated to aging and the paper is therefore simply not suitable for the journal. Sometimes, a paper looks as though it might meet the minimum standards for review if more detail were added; for example, some papers present too little information about results and others lack a literature review. In these instances, authors are encouraged to improve the paper and submit the new version. Other papers are simply below the minimum standards, and it is clear that they do not have the potential to be brought to publication standard, no matter how the authors might rework and revise the presentation. I continue to try to find the right balance between overburdening section editors and reviewers with manuscripts that have little chance of success and providing authors with the opportunity to learn from the peer review process and improve their future work, even if their current paper does not meet with success.

Table 2 provides information on the outcomes of the peer review process. It is difficult to calculate acceptance rates for any particular year, since some manuscripts are still in process, but the figures should enable readers to obtain a rough estimate of acceptance and rejection rates. The *closed* category represents instances in which authors have been asked to revise and resubmit manuscripts but have failed to do so. After several months a letter is sent to the author, urging her/him to submit the manuscript and providing a timeframe. If no response or a negative response is received, the file is closed.

Table 2: Outcomes of peer review process 2001–2003

	2001	2002	2003
Accepted	22	17	2
Rejected	13	18	9
Closed	3	1	0
Withdrawn	1	2	1
Not sent for review	7	11	13
Still in process	5	11	45
Total	51	60	70

Before I became Editor-in-Chief, I had no real idea of the number of people and amount of effort required to support the ongoing production of the *Canadian Journal on Aging*. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge these people. The journal is supported by a fine and very hardworking editorial board: Carole Cohen, Ingrid Connidis, Elaine Gallagher, Thomas Hadjistavropoulos, Daniel Lai, Michel Preville, and Lucie Richard. The peer review process is overseen by the various section editors, who enlist the support of two to three reviewers per manuscript. As is the usual custom, at the end of this issue, the first of the volume year, there is a list of the many people who have served as manuscript reviewers in 2003. In all, close to 200 individuals reviewed manuscripts for the journal last year. The list is somewhat longer than usual because two supplemental issues were in progress, in addition to the regular issues of the journal. On behalf

of the *Canadian Journal on Aging*, I wish to express my deepest thanks to the editorial board members and to the many individuals who have contributed to the peer review process in 2003. As well, my thanks go to Anne Marie Corrigan at University of Toronto Press, the journal's Managing Editor, who oversees the journal's production and business affairs, and to those of you who have submitted your work to the journal. Finally, the ongoing support of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and the CIHR Institute of Aging is gratefully acknowledged.

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Editor-in-Chief