The *British Journal of Clinical Pharmacology* Editors' Report for 2003

We are pleased to present our report for the year 2003.

Statistics

- During 2003 the *Journal* published 19 reviews (14 in a series, 5 stand-alone), 145 original research papers (including 30 short reports), and 13 letters. In addition there were 5 editorials, 9 articles entitled 'Editors' view' (an innovation: see below), 7 book reviews, one obituary, and the proceedings of the meetings of three societies: the Clinical Section of the British Pharmacological Society, the Dutch Society for Clinical Pharmacology and Biopharmacy, and (for the first time) the London Hypertension Society. In addition, the May issue was entirely devoted to a Festschrift in honour of Alasdair Breckenridge, who retired as Professor of Clinical Pharmacology in Liverpool, and who, to the delight of all the members of the Society, received a knighthood in the 2004 New Year's Honours list. We offer him our hearty congratulations and success in his new position as Chairman of the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA), as we do another erstwhile member of the Editorial Board of the *Journal*, Kent Woods, who was recently appointed to the position of Chief Executive Officer of the MHRA. We are always interested to hear news of those who have served the *Journal* in the past.
- Submissions came from 43 countries, as follows: UK (80), USA (26), Japan (25), Australia (24), Germany (21), the Netherlands (18), France (16), Switzerland (10), and others (under 10 each). The increase in submissions from Australia and Japan is as noteworthy and encouraging as the reduced number of submissions from Nordic countries is puzzling.
- 276 full research papers were submitted in 2003, of which 139 were accepted, 105 were rejected, and 32 were pending a decision at the end of the year.

- 69 short reports were submitted in 2003, of which 21 were accepted, 24 were rejected, and 24 were pending a decision at the end of the year.
- 17 reviews were published in 2003 – 14 of these were commissioned, including two major series on clinical research methods in gastroenterology and clinical pharmacology in the elderly.
- 7 further reviews were accepted for publication in 2004.
- 9 reviews were rejected after refereeing.

Modus operandi

- Submissions of original material from Japan and Australasia are handled via an Australasian office (editor, Evan Begg).
- Other submissions of original material are currently divided between the European editors (Martin Lenhard and Jim Ritter). The possibility of opening a North American office is being pursued, and we have advertised for applicants for the position of North American Editor.
- Reviews are handled by the Reviews Editor (Nigel Baber).
- Submitted papers are allocated to one of the European Editors or to the Australasian Editor. The Editor allocates each paper to one of 26 Executive Editors drawn from the Editors plus the 22 Executive Editors. The designated Executive Editor takes responsibility for the selection of peer reviewers, who sometimes include one of our 33 International Editors. The Executive Editor may negotiate changes with authors before returning papers, along with referees' reports and their recommendations, to the responsible Australasian or European Editor for a final decision. The Editor then sends a decision letter to the authors. All of this business during the past year has been conducted electronically, using Manu-

script Central, a system that, although more impersonal than the old system, has improved publication times considerably.

- The median time from submission (the date a manuscript is received at the editorial office) until the date the decision letter is sent was 35 days (range 8–76) for one European Editor and 29 days (range 8–58) for the other. This compares with 58 days in 2001 (range 20–93), the last year before Manuscript Central went live in January 2002.
- The time taken from acceptance to publication reflects both the timing of the acceptance letter in relation to the production cycle (i.e. the deadline for the relevant issue) and delays in receiving editorially required alterations and/or proof corrections from authors. In response to concerns that the delay between acceptance and publication was a serious deterrent to submission to the *Journal*, electronic publication using Online Early was introduced. The median time from acceptance to publication in 2003 was 1.5 months (Online Early) and 4.5 months (print version). A glance at databases such as Pubmed will show that papers that are published in Online Early are already indexed before they appear in the print version.
- A supplement entitled 'The Pharmacokinetics of Voriconazole' (guest editor Atholl Johnston) was published in December 2003.
- A new feature has been the monthly appearance since March 2003 of an article entitled 'Editors' View', written thus far by the Chairman of the Editorial Board. It is hoped that this topical piece will become an eagerly anticipated first point of call for readers after they remove each month's issue from its wrapper, and will draw them into reading the articles in the *Journal*. Other members of the Editorial Board will contribute to this series in 2004, in order to add diversity.
- The *Journal's* Impact Factor shows no clear trend with time: it was 2.3 in 2002, compared with 1.85 in 1999, 2.54 in 2000, and 2.15 in 2001. There is a considerable lag between the appearance of an article and its effect on the *Journal's* impact factor.
- The Editorial Management Board met regularly during 2003. In addition to the usual business, the Board discussed and agreed numerous changes to the

appearance of the *Journal*, in order to keep the style and appearance fresh, appealing, and readable. These were instituted in the January issue of 2004. The instructions to Authors were updated, including new information about publication of case reports.

- Changes to the Executive and International Editorial Boards were made, owing to completion of the usual terms of office of several Editors. In addition, A.K. Scott retired from the Executive Board during 2003, owing to other commitments. We thank all the retiring Editors for their hard work on behalf of the *Journal*. The changes took effect from January 2004.

Acknowledgements and thanks

We are grateful for the continued support given to the Editorial Board by the Society's Executive Officer, Sarah-Jane Stagg, and its Honorary Treasurer, Arthur Weston. The Society also acknowledges the crucial support of several key individuals from Blackwell Publishing. Martin Tilly (Production), with whom the European Editors have been working much more closely since Annemarie Hedges' retirement, has been exceptionally efficient and has enthusiastically guided us through the perilous waters of changing the format of the *Journal*. Editorial Assistant Lucy Garnier, who was crucial in keeping the nuts and bolts in place and the editorial process running smoothly, left in October to take on the challenge of running 'The Olive', a restaurant in Deddington, Oxfordshire, which we encourage members of the Society to patronize. We wish her the very best in her new venture. Her successor, Jennifer Powell, has already proved her worth. And last, but certainly not least, we again thank Elizabeth Whelan for her wisdom and support – too easily taken for granted, but absolutely critical to the success of the *Journal*.

Jeffrey K. Aronson

Chairman of the Editorial Board

Martin S. Lennard

European Editor

James M. Ritter

European Editor

Nigel S. Baber

Reviews Editor

Evan J. Begg

Australasian Editor