NHJ direct online in January 2011!

E.E. van der Wall

In one of our previous Editor's pages, we announced that our Netherlands Heart Journal (NHJ) received a 2009 impact factor of 1.4, which is a crucial step for our journal. This achievement was a consequence of another important step for our journal, being the recognition by PubMed as of January 2007. From that moment on, the Chief Editorial Board and our Publisher observed a considerable increase in submitted articles. In 2007 we received a total of 62 submissions. This number rose to 79 in 2008 and to 172 in 2009, an almost threefold increase! It is foreseen that the number of submitted articles in 2010 will probably exceed 200. From 2007 to 2009 the number of original papers grew from 24 to 61, the number of review articles from 7 to 15, and the number of case histories from 16 to 46. These figures are very stimulating, encouraging and rewarding for our journal.

However, there is a downside to this luxurious growth. The main disadvantage is the timely publication of papers, which is a crucial and vital parameter for the quality of a journal. To avoid time lags, one can adopt a more stringent acceptance policy. For our journal, the rejection rate has more than doubled from 24% to 57% (acceptance rate 43%) over a three-year period. Despite this rise in rejection rate, the NHJ has gradually become confronted with an increasing time lag between acceptance and publication. Since the number of editorial pages per issue is rather fixed, accepted papers will pile up before they go into press. In the end, such a back log might result in a negative spiral of less and less submissions as most authors want their papers to be published as soon as possible upon acceptance. Nowadays, authors prefer fast-track publication of their work.

To cope with this phenomenon, many journals have adopted an online policy whereby following acceptance papers are directly placed on PubMed [Epub ahead of print]. Usually within two weeks of acceptance articles become published online. This avoids unwanted and unpredictable time lags between acceptance and publication in the print version of a journal. There are other substantial advantages of an online journal over a print journal: page limitations are no longer a big issue, new information is instantly available, and relevant articles will be cited earlier.

It is therefore gratifying to announce that our NHJ will go online as of January 2011. With this new direct online approach, the NHJ will be able to meet the wish of every author to see him/her name appear on an NHJ article as soon as possible. ■

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Important news for authors

As of January 2011, all manuscripts will undergo a fully automated submission and layout process. All phases in the submission process will take place via the Editorial Management System (EMS). It is important that authors follow the instructions given in mail generated by the system carefully. We can no longer accept submissions via e-mail.

The Instructions for Authors have also been amended. Please pay special attention to the requirements for tables and figures. These instructions can be found at: <http://nhj.edmgr.com/>

Please be aware that articles that do not meet these requirements will not be accepted for review.