EDITORIAL

25th anniversary of the Scandinavian Journal of Primary Health Care

The Scandinavian Journal of Primary Health Care (SJPHC) was founded in 1982 and the first issue appeared in May 1983. The 25th anniversary of SJPHC will, therefore, take place in 2007. We are sorry we cannot offer our readers and authors a glass of something or a piece of cake in celebration, but the anniversary will be marked by a symposium at the Nordic Congress of General Practice in Reykjavik, Iceland (13–16 June 2007). The symposium will reflect the close relationship between the Journal and the development of academic general practice in the Scandinavian countries.

The founding Editor-in-Chief Paul Backer (1982–1987) was also the first professor of general practice in Denmark. Being a great initiator he managed the difficult task of creating a peer-reviewed journal in a new academic field by means of a lot of work and little money. The other former Editors-in-Chief, who have developed the Journal into one of the major scientific journals in general practice, were Harald Siem (1987–1988), Christian Borchgrevink (1989–1995) and Calle Bengtsson (1996–2003). At the beginning the publisher was Almqvist & Wiksell, and we have followed our publisher in mergers into first Scandinavian University Press and later Taylor & Francis.

The editorial group has always included a national editor from each of the Scandinavian countries: Sweden, Norway, Iceland, Finland and Denmark. For many years the editorial group and the publisher were the owners of SJPHC, and the organizational framework of the Journal was very loose until 1999, when the ownership was passed on to the national colleges of general practice in the Scandinavian countries. In 2005 ownership was transferred to the Nordic Federation of General Practice created by the national colleges [1]. This federation is also responsible for the Nordic congresses of general practice.

It is evident from protocols that some of the issues discussed at editorial meetings in the old days were the same as those today:

The *number of subscribers* – always a preoccupation for journals – has increased from 3 000 to more than 10 000. Most readers have a collective subscription

as members of the colleges of general practice in the Nordic countries. The economy of the Journal is based on a commitment from these colleges to create an international platform for publication of research relevant to general practice in Scandinavia. A recent increase in the number of subscriptions has been due to a reorganization among GPs in Norway and some of the members of the Norwegian College of General Practice established in January 2007 are new readers: a warm welcome to you!

The main *content of the Journal* has always been peer-reviewed original articles. This is important to fulfil our mission. The problem is that few readers will be interested in everything from cover to cover. Some even find research articles in a standardized format boring, and there has been a running discussion as to how the Journal could be made more interesting for readers. In recent years we have tried articles with news from general practice in the Nordic countries, articles about continuing medical development, review articles – and there is still room for improvement! Pages for editorial material are, however, “expensive”. We have limited space (4 issues per year with 64 pages in each) and we have to reject almost 70% of the original research articles sent to us.

The *scientific quality* of the Journal has been in focus for 25 years. All published articles have been subject to peer review, and the quality of articles has increased with the development of general practice as a medical speciality. Getting the Journal into

searchable indexes was a successful struggle in the first years. Today articles in SJPHC are easy to find in traditional paper-based indexes or on the Web. More recently we have succeeded in getting a so-called “Journal Impact Factor” (JIF), which is a measure showing how often articles in the Journal are cited in the international scientific literature. This is not a perfect measure of the scientific quality of the journal [2] but it is comforting that the SJPHC’s factor at present is 1.6 and thus is similar to the JIF of the other major general practice journals.

Most *articles* in the 1980s were simple descriptive studies and often had authors who looked at general practice from the outside. Last year’s volume of the Journal demonstrates that research in our field has become more analytical and with an insider’s view on general practice [see e.g. [3–7]].

The paper version of SJPHC is still very similar to the first issues in 1983, but the underlying *technology* has changed recently. Last year our editorial process became electronic and today manuscript submissions, reviewing, and editorial handling are performed electronically using the program Manuscript Manager. Also, a net version of the Journal has been established and from January 2007 placed on a new platform (informaworldTM) with direct access from Pub Med, hyperlinks etc. The full version of articles will be accessible to our readers on the Web. You will find it all on our website: <http://www.sjphc.org>

At the Scandinavian Journal of Primary Health Care we hope to be part of a continued strong development of general practice and primary health-care in the coming years. There is little doubt that

electronic publishing will develop further, and we expect a new interplay between the electronic journal and a paper version.

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