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Expanding the frontiers of ageing research

Published online: 25 February 2006
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With the first issue of the European Journal of Ageing (EJA) in 2006, the journal's third volume, we want to share with you our satisfaction and gratitude about the state of the journal. In this age of electronic communication, while we are writing this editorial (January 31), already the first article of this issue can be viewed online at springerlink.com (Larsson et al. 2006, this issue). We are satisfied, because we have achieved our goal of publishing four issues in 2005, each with articles on cutting-edge European and worldwide ageing research from the social, behavioural and health-related sciences. Three of the issues of 2005 were featuring special sections, including introductory and discussion papers, as well as free submissions. The fourth issue included free submissions only. On the Springer website, under 'online first', the five most viewed articles can be called up. At the moment of writing, these include not only an article published in March 2005 (Maier and Klumb 2005) but also already an article published in December 2005 (Börsch-Supan and Hank 2005). We are grateful to have been able to publish high-quality articles such as these. We feel indebted to both authors and reviewers.

In our editorial 1 year ago (Wahl and Deeg 2005), we stated three goals of the EJA in the years to come. In addition to the very concrete first goal to produce four issues in 2005, we stated as our second goal to steadily increase the impact of the EJA on the international gerontology research community. An important step to reach this goal is to increase the distribution of our journal. In collaboration with our publisher, we have worked on this throughout the year by presenting the

journal at conferences and mailing out advertising materials listing the publisher's website. Also, we have applied to PsychLit to have the EJA included in their database. However, we realise that our second goal should keep our full attention.

As a third goal, we hoped to contribute to the strengthening and integration of research on ageing in Europe, with particular consideration for the new EU member states. Looking back, in 2005, we have published 30 articles, the first authors of which came from 13 countries. Most articles originated from Western and Northern Europe, and only a minority from Mediterranean countries and North America. Four publications had cross-national authorships, a few including co-authors from Eastern Europe. As regards our geographic scope, it seems there is still room for improvement. A condition for this is that the ageing research basis in Eastern and Mediterranean Europe is further strengthened. This must also be an important task for the EU 7th Framework Programme.

The goals stated in 2005 will remain our goals for the coming years. In pursuing them, as editors, we will continue to work with our four 'parties': the publisher, the authors, the reviewers, and the readers. Based on our recent experience, we feel cautiously confident that the year 2006 will bring us closer to our goals.

The current issue features four original investigations all dealing with important issues related to health and health-care services, in addition to some focus on methodology. Furthermore, this issue includes a review of longitudinal studies of ageing and health (Seematter-Bagnoud 2006, this issue). For many research questions, the longitudinal design is the design of choice. However, as the authors note, many longitudinal databases are underused. We hope, with the authors, that publishing this comprehensive overview will lead to better utilisation of existing longitudinal databases. Finally, we are happy to present a contribution to our section *Critical Issues in Ageing Research*. In his contribution, Dr. Israel Doron eloquently pleads for integration of the emerging discipline of elder law into gerontological research

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(Doron 2006, this issue). Borrowing a quote from his paper, “to combine something old with something new” expands the frontiers of current disciplines, to the advancement of our understanding of human ageing as well as of the place and rights of older people. This seems a worthy adage for our ageing research endeavour.

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