

## AAPS PharmSciTech Volume 6, Issue 1 – Editorial

Patrick P. DeLuca

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In the closing issue of Volume 5 in October, 2004, I reported with delight that *AAPS PharmSciTech* had been accepted for indexing in the Institute for Scientific Information's *Science Citation Index Expanded* and that ISI would be assigning an impact factor. I was extremely confident that the journal would be receiving an impact factor in the near future because the journal had experienced a substantial increase in manuscripts submitted and the inventory of papers in the accepted and minor revision categories suggested that the journal would reach 90 publications in 2004. Unfortunately, our expectations were not realized and the journal published the same number of papers as the previous year, 70. Despite my disappointment, I felt it was prudent to explain why our expectations were not realized and share with you the problems the journal has encountered over the last 9 months.

Online publishing has been emerging over the last decade and it was a new endeavor for AAPS. So experiencing growing pains is not surprising, and, actually, the substantial increase in manuscripts submitted last year contributed to the problems. The in-house AAPS publication staff could not handle the manuscript growth, and for a period of time, they were attempting to "burn the candle at both ends." AAPS' journal publishing model, developed in the late 1990's, was in dire need of reassessment and refinement. Internal reorganization was required and outsourcing was essential. The necessary reorganization occurred late last year and arrangements for outsourcing the production phases (copyedit and publishing) have been established. At the time of this writing 40 manuscripts were in the production phase and all should be published by the end of June.

Many authors have been frustrated because of the bottlenecks that occurred all along the submission, review and production processes. And they have every right to be frustrated and angry. As the chief editor I was also frustrated with the bottlenecks, as well as an outdated tracking system, which was in dire need of refinement. I apologize for the delays that have occurred in 1) entering manuscripts into the tracking system and initiating the review process, 2) facilitating the initial reviews, 3) expediting the revisions, and 4) publishing the manuscripts after acceptance. AAPS staff and I thank you for your patience and indulgence.

The refinements which have been made in the manuscript tracking system will result in greater efficiency and the system will be more transparent. First of all, authors will submit their manuscripts through the tracking system and will see and sign-off on the PDF that will go to referees.

The editor will be cued to assign referees at the same time. I will continue to invite referees before making assignments by providing the abstract. About 75% of those invited respond and ~67% accept. So to get 2 referees, 4 invitations are required. For this reason I generally send 5 invitations. The initial review process is largely governed by the response of the reviewers. About half of the referees require reminders and a good percentage receive a second reminder. About 10% fail to complete their review and in most of those cases I will undertake a review if only one referee has responded. As far as the initial review phase is concerned, I can assure you that the journal will endeavor to assign referees within a 10-day period and then limit the time for completing the reviews to 4 weeks. Another major refinement has been that once a manuscript is accepted it will go directly to the publishing firm for copyediting and page proof production, with the authors receiving their page proofs within 2 weeks. So the time from official acceptance to publishing should not be longer than one month.

I am confident that we are over the hurdles and some of the growing pains of electronic publishing. In addition to the 40 papers in the production phase, there are 35 in the major and minor revision categories and 46 in the initial review process. Based on a current rejection level of ~35%, there could be another 60 manuscripts that will reach the production phase in the next 2 months. So the future is bright, and reaching 100 manuscripts published in 2005 is a reality.

With the reorganization and a committed AAPS publishing staff, I, as Chief Editor of *AAPS PharmSciTech*, will continue to be sensitive to the desires of the authors and endeavor to have an impact factor established by ISI before the annual meeting in November.

Respectfully Submitted,

Patrick P. DeLuca,  
Chief Editor