

# JLR 2000: Changes in management and publication

This issue of the *Journal of Lipid Research* (*JLR*), volume 41, number 8 is the 350th to be published, a relatively low number compared to many journals, but nevertheless a significant achievement. *JLR* is unique among scientific journals in that it has no society, academic, or commercial sponsorship and it may have been the first sub-specialty journal devoted to a specific class of biochemical materials. As described below, *JLR* has been on a sound fiscal basis for many years. Given the many changes and challenges in science publishing, however, the Board of Directors of Lipid Research, Inc. (LRI), the owner of *JLR*, have concluded that it is prudent to consider sponsorship by, or transfer of ownership to, an established scientific society.

Accordingly, during the past year, LRI has been exploring an affiliation with the American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (ASBMB). For some time, ASBMB has been considering an expansion of its publication operations beyond *the Journal of Biological Chemistry* and has considered publication of journals in various specialty areas. Discussions initially involved Dr. Ed Dennis, then Chair of the ASBMB Publications Committee, and the Directors of LRI, and, subsequently, the Publications Committee, officers and Council of ASBMB, and the Advisory Board of the *JLR*. This has now resulted in an agreement under which ASBMB will assume management responsibility for production of the *JLR* for a period of up to three years, beginning June 1, 2000. During this time, LRI and ASBMB will explore moving to acquisition of the *JLR* as an official publication of the Society. Meanwhile, our contractual relationship with ASBMB will be almost the same as that we have had for many years with the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology (FASEB), and LRI will remain as publisher and owner of the Journal.

To facilitate further exploration of the *JLR* becoming an official ASBMB Journal, the President of LRI has been appointed to the ASBMB Publications Committee, and ASBMB will likewise have representation on the Board of Directors of LRI.

As a background to these changes in the Journal's operations, it is of interest to go back more than 40 years and summarize how the Journal came into being and how it developed to become a premier journal providing a forum for publication of articles in the broad area of lipids and lipid metabolism.

In the 1950s lipid research was transformed not only by new analytical procedures for lipids, e.g., cholesterol and

triglycerides, but also by new chromatographic methods such as gas-liquid chromatography and thin-layer chromatography. During this period also, new techniques evolved for the fractionation of lipoproteins. There was new insight into the role of lipoproteins in lipid metabolism, and the new procedures were applied to the study of atherosclerosis. This explosion in lipid and lipoprotein methodology opened new areas of investigation in the lipid field.

The *JLR* was an outgrowth of the new methodology. In the late 1950s, Dr. Edward (Pete) H. Ahrens and his colleagues at Rockefeller University discussed the publication of a lipid methodology handbook. In 1957 the National Heart Institute appointed a Committee on Problems of Lipid Analysis, and in April 1958 this committee endorsed the concept of a methods handbook. Dr. Ahrens, a member of the committee, proposed the development of a loose-leaf methods handbook. In May 1958 the Metabolism and Nutrition Study Section approved the concept, and Dr. Ahrens offered the editorship of the fledgling handbook to Dr. Donald Zilversmit. Zilversmit submitted a grant application to the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to obtain funding for the publication of a loose-leaf manual that could be kept current and mailed quarterly. The grant was awarded in August 1958. However, after many discussions involving Drs. Ahrens and Zilversmit and senior scientists at Rockefeller University, the concept of a handbook was set aside in favor of a high-quality journal that would be edited and controlled by researchers in the lipid field. The change in concept was approved by the Heart Council of NIH, and a nonprofit corporate group, Lipid Research, Inc., was established. Its sole function would be the publication of the journal. The first issue, Volume 1, Number 1, was published in October 1959. That issue and many that followed in those early years were heavily weighted with methodology. However, there were also important articles in lipid metabolism and biochemistry. The first article in the first issue (October 1959) was a review entitled "Biosynthesis of fatty acids and cholesterol considered as chemical processes" by Dr. J. W. Cornforth who received the Nobel Prize in 1975. The journal fared well, and in 1963 it returned to the NIH monies that were held in a reserve fund; the grant was terminated in 1969. Since that time, the journal has been entirely self-supporting. [A more detailed account of the early history of *JLR* can be found in an article by Dr. Howard A. Eder (*J. Lipid Res.* 1984. **25**: 1425–1429) from which much of the above information was derived.]

The editorial and publication management of the journal has undergone many changes. In 1964, Dr. Peter Woodford was appointed to the newly created position of Executive Editor. He was succeeded in September 1969 by Dr. Lewis I. Gidez. The journal moved from Rockefeller University first to Albert Einstein College of Medicine, and later to FASEB. Dr. Gidez was Executive Editor until his retirement on June 30, 2000.

Although production management of the *JLR* has changed, the review and publication policies remain unchanged. We have a major commitment to increase the speed of the review process and to shorten the publication time. Currently, the average time from submission to acceptance, including revision time, is about 4.7 months; however, for two-thirds of the articles the time is 4.7 months or less. The production time (date of acceptance to date of publication) averages 3.3 months. We are continuing expedited reviews of manuscripts, where appro-

priate, in order to streamline the review process. We continue to invite review articles; however, we would like to encourage shorter reviews that cover timely topics.

With the advent of the new millennium, we are updating the scope of the *JLR* as stated in the revised "Instructions to Authors" in this issue. The *JLR* is seeking papers on molecular mechanisms, genetic regulation of metabolism, cell biology, and structural biology as they apply to lipid research. This emphasis is certainly within the mission of the journal, which publishes papers at the forefront of lipid research. We look forward to the continuing success of the *JLR* as we enter the new millennium.

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