

Editorial

PHARMACEUTICAL RESEARCH: A QUALITY JOURNAL ON A MISSION

Pharmaceutical Research is the leading pharmaceutical journal today. Its quality, as measured by impact factor,¹ has consistently increased over the past decade. Its most recent value of 2.53 is the highest among pharmaceutical journals. This consistent increase in performance was derived from the support of authors from all over the world² who selected *Pharmaceutical Research* for publishing their best pharmaceutically relevant research. Another key factor is the editorial team's effort in cultivating these very authors in assigning *Pharmaceutical Research* a high priority as they contemplate which high impact journal to showcase their work. We have done so by moving manuscripts in a timely fashion through a vigorous, fair peer review process. I dare to say that we have the best record in the industry, averaging a 5-week turnaround time from receipt of manuscript to reaching the first editorial decision. This exemplary level of service to our authors, coupled with a respectable impact factor, may be what is required to result in their favoring *Pharmaceutical Research* to publish their work over other journals.

When I assumed the editorship five years ago, I set as a goal to take *Pharmaceutical Research* to an impact factor of 3.0 by the year 2001. Judging from our past success, this is an achievable goal. As always, my fellow editors and I are committed to accepting manuscripts of the highest quality, as determined by expert reviewers. In this regard, I thank members of the Editorial Advisory Board for also actively participating in manuscript review.

During the past three years, we have accepted only 35–40% of submitted manuscripts, which we feel reflects the rigor of our peer review process. It is also a main driving force behind our rising impact factor. At the same time, the number of manuscripts submitted has risen by 10–15%, so that we have been bumping up against our contractual limit of 1843 pages per year established five years ago. Fortunately, our publisher has just offered to an 8.5% increase in pages for the coming year. This change will not relax our drive for quality and concise presentation, however. Rather, it will allow us to accept more high impact papers than in the past.

What identity should *Pharmaceutical Research* project in the future? I propose it should transition from a broadly based journal to one with a focus. This focus should be directed to the following areas: (a) drug transport, delivery, and targeting; (b) pharmacokinetics, pharmacodynamics, drug metabolism, and clinical pharmacology; (c) pharmaceutical engineering (e.g., material science, formulation development, and pharmaceutical processing); and (d) pharmaceutical chemistry (e.g., drug discovery, computational chemistry, and analysis). These are the areas that reflect the mix of accepted manuscripts in the past three years, with one-third

each derived from each of the first two areas and the remaining one-third from the last two combined. Today's recurring topics in *Pharmaceutical Research* that fall into the four focus areas include: molecular biology, cell biology, biophysics of drug transporters; drug efflux; pharmacokinetic-pharmacodynamic modeling; biopharmaceutic drug classification system (i.e., *in vitro-in vivo* correlations); predictors of drug absorption; high throughput screening; lyophilization; protein formulation; controlled drug delivery; macromolecular drug delivery (peptides, proteins, nucleic acids, and genes); transdermal drug delivery; and respiratory drug delivery.

For *Pharmaceutical Research* to remain a leading pharmaceutical journal, it must constantly seek out new and hot areas of science. We must reach out into new developments that support the focus areas of the journal. These may include pharmacogenetics/pharmacogenomics, computational biology, structural biology, nanotechnology, microprocessor-based drug delivery, biomaterials, and supercritical fluid-based processing, just to name a few. Papers on these subjects will complement those that represent the forefront of pharmaceutical research today.

Pharmaceutical Research is one of several official journals of the American Association of Pharmaceutical Scientists (AAPS).³ I take great pride, and with deep appreciation, in acknowledging that 40% of the manuscripts published over the past five years were from authors who were members of AAPS. I also take comfort in the fact that the journal has gained recognition by non-AAPS members. To me, they represent an underutilized resource for the journal as it seeks to reach out into the broader community of scientists whose work lies in the frontiers of pharmaceutical research. I hope that, over time, these scientists will make *Pharmaceutical Research* their forum for regularly communicating novel discoveries to their peers and, in so doing, increase the citation frequency of *Pharmaceutical Research* papers in their own work.

As the journal enters its 17th year, I am optimistic about its future. I thank all of you for your support in the past five years, and ask for your continual support of this premier pharmaceutical journal. In return, I pledge to work with all of you to maintain the high quality of *Pharmaceutical Research*. I also pledge to work with my fellow editors and members on the Editorial Advisory Board to further strengthen the mission and scope of our journal. Above all, I will continue pressing the publisher and AAPS to reach an agreement of putting *Pharmaceutical Research* on line this year.

Let's work towards making *Pharmaceutical Research* the best possible journal.

Vincent H. L. Lee⁴
Editor-in-Chief

¹ Impact factor is the ratio of citations to recent articles to number of recent articles.

² Of the papers published in *Pharmaceutical Research* in 1999, 60% was from the Americas, 28% from Europe, and 12% from Asia.

³ Ownership of *Pharmaceutical Research* is with Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers, not AAPS.

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