

## Editorial

### STATE OF THE JOURNAL

The state of the journal *Pharmaceutical Research* is sound. More than ever, it continues to be the premier pharmaceutical sciences journal in the world. Its most recent impact factor of 2.060 is an all time high and is the highest among pharmaceutical sciences journals. In 1996, the journal attracted and published manuscripts from many countries: 56% from North America, 32% from Europe, and 12% from Asia. The journal published the same percentage of manuscripts as it received from academia (64%), industry (32%), and government (4%). *Pharmaceutical Research* is a broad-based journal. About 20% of the manuscripts it published in 1996 focused on some aspect of chemistry, 26% on biochemical and clinical pharmacology, 24% on drug delivery and targeting, 14% on membrane and mass transport, 8% on pharmaceutical technology and engineering, 7% on pharmacokinetics, and 1% on pharmaceutical evaluation, utilization, and approval. Nevertheless, we need to continue reaching out to manuscripts on topics which are not currently represented but which are logically within the broad definition of pharmaceutical sciences. These topics include combinatorial chemistry, molecular dynamics, *in vitro* biopharmaceutical techniques, cell-based therapeutics, gene therapy, molecular aspects of drug transport and metabolism, signal transduction, biomaterials, analytical technology, and health economics, just to name a few.

When I became editor-in-chief two years ago, I set two goals for *Pharmaceutical Research*. The first goal was to publish first-rate papers in a timely fashion, while the second goal was to diversify the contents of the journal. We met the first goal. In 1996, it averaged 7 months from manuscript receipt to publication, and authors were informed of the first editorial decision within an average of 6 weeks of manuscript receipt at the editorial office.

Several factors contributed to this rapid turnaround. First and foremost, we owe it to the dedicated expert reviewers, who graciously agreed to review manuscripts within 2–3 weeks of receipt. The 75 editorial board members formed the core of this manuscript review team, thereby lending stability to consistently high quality reviews. Harold Boxenbaum, Daan Crommelin, Ken-ichi Inui, Rudy Juliano, William Jusko, Thomas Ludden, Duane Miller, Randall Mrsny, Michael Pikal, Ronald Reid, Wolfgang Sadée, Tomi Sawyer, and Timothy Wiedmann deserve special mention for reviewing six or more manuscripts in 1996.

Second, we owe the rapid turnaround time to the conscientious editors: Yuichi Sugiyama, Editor-Japan; Bernard Testa, Editor-Europe and Joachim Mayer, Assistant Editor-Europe; William Evans, Associate Editor with responsibility for the biological and clinical sciences; Kinam Park, Associate Editor with responsibility for the physical and chemical sciences; and Bonnie Svarstad with responsibility for the pharmaco- and socioeconomic sciences. Without remuneration, these highly dedicated pharmaceutical scientists were responsible for distilling the reviewers' comments to render a timely editorial decision. I knew of many occasions when the editors worked with

the authors in the role of a facilitator as well as of an advocate, thereby elevating the standard of pharmaceutical sciences in the long run. A special note of thanks goes to Yuichi Sugiyama, who just retired from the editorial team after four years of distinguished service in establishing a presence for *Pharmaceutical Research* in Japan. He was succeeded by Mitsuru Hashida on the Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences at Kyoto University.

The short turnaround time of 6 weeks to first editorial decision would not have been possible without the dedicated editorial staff in each editorial office. Here I would like to acknowledge the staff in my own editorial office at the University of Southern California: Ruth Ellis-Ballard, who is responsible for contacting prospective reviewers and sending them the manuscripts within one week of receipt; Ken-ichi Hosoya, who is responsible for reminding the overly committed reviewers; and Elizabeth Gongora, who is responsible for assembling the accepted manuscripts into an issue for forwarding to the publisher at the end of each month.

Depending on when the accepted manuscripts reach my office, they will be published within two to three months of acceptance. The 5–6 months of manuscript backlog during much of 1995 and early 1996 was eased tremendously by the decision of the American Association of Pharmaceutical Scientists, in late 1995, to invest resources in 400 additional pages in the journal. By contract with Plenum—the publisher, the journal can publish only 1,869 pages of manuscripts or approximately 300 manuscripts per year.

With respect to the second goal—diversifying the contents of the journal, we have made substantial progress. In addition to the contributed papers in the form of either Research Articles, Reports or Technical Notes, each issue has been featuring invited special feature contributions such as commentaries, review articles, workshop reports, or news from the National Institute of General Medical Sciences (NIGMS). The last feature, addressing new initiatives and funding mechanisms of the institute, was the effort of Rochelle Long, Program Director, Pharmacological and Physiological Sciences Branch of the Pharmacology, Physiology, and Biological Chemistry Division of NIGMS. Her column should be of great interest to readers from either universities or small businesses.

Since January of this year, Daan Crommelin of the Utrecht Institute for Pharmaceutical Sciences at Utrecht University in the Netherlands has been Special Features editor. He will be mainly responsible for developing a roster of timely, and perhaps controversial, mini-review and commentary topics covering the wide spectrum of pharmaceutical sciences. His goal is to publish either a mini-review or commentary in each issue. Through these special features, we hope to bring you the latest advances in the emerging sciences currently underrepresented in the contributed papers pool. Should you be interested in submitting a mini-review or commentary or should you be aware of a colleague who may be persuaded to do so, please contact Daan Crommelin *in advance* at Utrecht Institute for Pharmaceutical Sciences, Department of Pharmaceutics, P.O. Box 80.082 TB Utrecht, The Netherlands; email, D.J.A. Crom-

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An important change in manuscript classification has recently been instituted. Upon recommendation of the editorial advisory board, all contributed papers received after November 1, 1996 will be designated as Research Articles, unless they are self-designated as, or deemed by the reviewers and editors to be, Technical Notes. It is anticipated that the transition will not be complete until July 1997, given the volume of manuscripts already in different stages of the review and revision cycle. There is a limit of 4,000 words, 16 pages, 8 figures and tables, and 30 references. These limits should best be viewed as a guide. If the nature of your work warrants additional pages, figures and tables, please do not hesitate to consult with your regional editor or me in advance. As always, manuscripts on novel concepts, novel hypotheses, novel methodologies, and novel technologies of broad interest to the readership gain more favorable editorial decisions.

Here, I would like to remind you of the *Rapid Communications* manuscript category. These should be concise reports of high quality (2,000 words, 4 figures and tables, and 15 references) on ground-breaking research and which, therefore, will be moved very rapidly through the system. These are the papers which may be published as is, if accepted, within 2-3 months of receipt.

In the coming year, I will work diligently with the publisher, Plenum Publishing Corporation, to see to it that *Pharmaceutical Research* be available on line and that manuscript submission and review be feasible electronically in the not too distant future. This would require a significant commitment on the part of the publisher to act expeditiously and to invest accordingly.

Two years ago when I accepted the appointment as Editor-in-Chief, I did so with the conviction to ensure that *Pharmaceutical Research* is the premier journal of all pharmaceutical sciences worldwide. Today, I report to you with a sense of accomplishment. I offer my heartfelt thanks to you as loyal supporters of our journal either as readers, authors or reviewers, as well as to all members of the editorial team in their capacity as editors, editorial board members, or editorial assistants. To close as I did in my editorial in 1995, ". . . *Pharmaceutical Research* is your journal. Your editors, editorial board members, and editor-in-chief are eager to hear from you concerning ways in which the journal can be improved. I hope that I can count on your continued support, and I pledge to continue doing my best to lead *Pharmaceutical Research* to become a rich source of timely papers on the cutting edge of pharmaceutical sciences worldwide."

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