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## Urological Research: a new era

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Urological Research has provided a valuable service to urologists for almost 30 years as an organ for the dissemination of the latest research activities and advances in basic and clinical urology. Under the editorship of Professor Fritz Schröder, it has successfully continued to achieve these goals over the last 11 years. However, with changing emphasis within urological research, the publishers, Springer Verlag, have decided to change the scope and objectives of the journal for the future. With Professor Schröder's retirement at the end of 2002, it seemed an opportune time to introduce these changes.

From 1 January 2003, Urological Research will become mainly, *but not exclusively*, a journal for urolithi-

asis and its related areas of research and this will be reflected in the subtitle of the journal. During the 40 years that I have been connected with stone research, there has never been a journal that has been uniquely suited to the demands and requirements of "lithophiles". Part of the problem has been the wide range of disciplines involved in urolithiasis research including diagnosis, epidemiology, environmental studies, nutrition, ion transport and micropuncture studies, pathogenesis, chemistry of crystallisation, genetics, inborn errors of metabolism, molecular and cell biology, clinical biochemistry, endourology, stone removal techniques, medical management and preventative therapy. Urological Research will now provide a natural home for all these sub-specialty areas connected with stone disease. At the same time, however, the journal will continue to provide an outlet for high quality papers in other areas of urological endeavour.

In order to facilitate this transition and to promote the journal within the stone field, four Associate Editors have kindly agreed to assist with the distribution of manuscripts for review and with the collation of the Reviewers' reports. They have been chosen for the major contributions that they have made to stone research over a number of years and for their expertise and standing in the field. Each will have responsibility for papers submitted from a particular geographical area – Professor Rosemary Ryall for Australasia and Africa, Professor Koji Suzuki for the Pacific Rim countries and all Asia apart from the Middle East, Professor Hans-Göran Tiselius for Europe and the Middle East and Professor Glenn Preminger for the Americas. I am greatly indebted to these already heavily committed individuals for their support and encouragement and look forward to a stimulating and productive association with them. Each of the Editorial Staff, including myself, works within a department of urology, so that the continuity with other areas of urology will not be lost.

A new Editorial Board of advisers has been appointed which represents the ubiquitous nature of stone research both in terms of the worldwide occurrence of

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the problem and in terms of the wide range of disciplines encompassed by the field. Some members of the current Editorial Board with expertise in other areas of urological research have been invited to remain on the Board in order to provide continuity and also to assist with the review of manuscripts outside the stone field. The Associate Editors and the members of the Editorial Board have been charged with ensuring that only top quality manuscripts will be accepted for publication. The aim is to produce a steady improvement in the impact factor of the journal, which has hovered around the 1 mark for a number of years. This will require a major effort on everyone's part, not least my own.

Also, commencing on 1 January 2003, the process for the submission of manuscripts to Urological Research will undergo major reorganisation with the introduction of a new electronic system for the management and transfer of papers. From that date, authors will be encouraged to submit their manuscripts electronically through the Manuscript Central website. Details of how to do this may be found in the 2003 issues of the journal and at <http://ur.manuscriptcentral.com>. If you are a first-time user of the website, you will have to create a new account for yourself including your own password. You can do this by clicking on the "Create a New Account" button and then following the on-screen instructions. It is very simple. Once you have an account and a password of your choosing, you may continue to use this whenever you wish to submit an article to the journal.

Manuscripts may still be submitted in the form of hard copy by those researchers who do not have ready access to facilities for the electronic submission of their

papers. However, by eliminating the use of traditional mail for the submission, review and decision-making processes, the new system should lead to faster and more efficient publication of articles. It should also make the journal accessible to a larger number of readers through the electronic edition of the journal. Details of how to access the electronic edition of the journal may be obtained through the Springer website at <http://link.springer.de/link/service/journals/00240/>.

Contributions to Urological Research may be submitted as full-length original articles or rapid communications. Editorials and review articles may be published by invitation from the Editor and the Editorial Board. All submissions will be peer-reviewed. It is also hoped to introduce a Correspondence Section for the lively discussion of issues raised by papers published in the journal. I will continue to welcome relevant contributions on all topics of interest to urologists, nephrologists, clinical biochemists, epidemiologists, basic scientists and nurses but with particular emphasis on articles within the field of urolithiasis research. It is also hoped that the journal will provide an outlet for conference proceedings in the stone field.

Finally, on a personal note, I look forward to this new era in the development of Urological Research and will dedicate myself to ensuring that the new format for the journal will foster and promote the highest standards of research in urology. I invite you to participate in this venture by submitting your best quality work to the journal.

William G. Robertson  
Editor