
Editor's Corner: Challenges

THESE ARE challenging times in science. There's never quite enough money to support the amount of quality research available, our universities are on tight budgets and libraries have to make every penny count. All of these issues produce demands on scientific journals.

Therefore, it's not surprising that, during the 5 years since I assumed the role of Editor, the *Journal of Studies on Alcohol* has faced several crises. First, we had developed an excessive amount of time between receipt of a manuscript and the initial decision regarding publication. With the help of our wonderful editorial staff office at Rutgers and the hard work of our associate editors, however, the turnaround time soon decreased to a very respectable 4 to 6 weeks. Fortunately, this remains our current average.

Then, just when we thought we had all of the major problems in hand, a crisis related to illness in some key staff produced an inordinate amount of time between acceptance and publication. All of us at *JSA* saw this as an untenable situation, and steps were immediately implemented to overcome the problem. In an editorial published in January, 1999, we promised the readers that we would work to overcome this backlog by early 2000. I am happy to report that we have been able to meet this goal, and we enter the new millennium with as rapid a turnaround between acceptance and publication as we have ever had.

Of course, there is still a lot to do. One goal for the year 2000 is to be able to tell authors that they can expect that their papers will be published by the third issue following the time of acceptance. To meet this goal we will be taking additional steps to shorten the amount of time in "typesetting" by turning to a process of editing and production directly from the computer disks you submit with your manuscript. We will also be looking for additional steps to help with the most efficient processing of your papers.

To be optimally effective, however, we need some help from each of you. First, all submissions should include a computer disk of the manuscript. Second, the work of the editorial staff can be streamlined if authors are certain that the abstract, body of the paper, tables or figures and refer-

ences are submitted in the *Journal* style. Third, it is important that authors work closely with our editorial staff when requests are made for additional information, for original figures, clarifications regarding statistics and for further reference information. We will be requesting that authors reply to us as soon as possible. If the process takes too long, the date of publication might be delayed.

Many of these steps that improve the efficiency of the *Journal* will be achieved through the addition of editorial staff. In order to make this possible, we are actively seeking additional sources of revenue. These include donations, possible advertising and the development of special issues. However, we will *not* be asking authors to pay page costs. We believe it is imperative to make access to publication in *JSA* as freely available to authors as possible, without imposing additional financial burdens.

There is something you, the readership, can do to help us with our financial bottom line. We hope that you will take a moment to make sure that the *Journal of Studies on Alcohol* is available to everyone through your institution's libraries. If you can check with your librarian to be certain that we are represented, these subscriptions can go a long way in helping to ensure that we continue to do the best job possible.

Few worthwhile projects are easy and the development and maintenance of a high-quality journal is no exception. We at the *Journal of Studies on Alcohol* are grateful to you for the fine submissions that you have sent us, the excellent reviews that you have offered when we have asked your opinion on a potential manuscript and for your subscriptions. On a personal note, I have thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to serve as the editor of this *Journal* over the prior 5 years, and I look forward to the challenges and accomplishments I know will be associated with my continuing tenure as editor.

I wish you all a wonderful new millennium.

Marc A. Schuckit
Editor