

EJNMMI: the European way of communicating science

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Dear readers,
Publishing makes scientific information available. In modern science, only discoveries that are published are taken into account. Over the past decade, innumerable scientific papers have been published in close to 42,000 journals worldwide. The internet facilitates unlimited access for everyone to virtually everything that is published. Interested readers are faced with the overwhelming difficulty of reviewing and digesting what is published in books, journals and the internet in massive quantities every single day. In consequence, how to effectively assess the relevance, trustworthiness and quality of the enormous amount of available information has become a central issue in the scientific community.

In this era of massive transfer of information, good scientific publishing is becoming more important and demanding. Scientific journals such as the *European Journal of Nuclear Medicine and Molecular Imaging* (EJNMMI) have a key role in disseminating knowledge about high-quality and honest medical science, in order to optimize clinical procedures and promote best practice. In particular in Europe, respected medical journals are considered an important component of the so-called European public sphere [1].

The peer review system was proposed by Henry Oldenburg [2] in the 17th century, when he was editor of *Philosophical Transactions*. Since then, the principle that submitted papers are better judged by colleagues of similar experience and knowledge has been adopted by most scientific or medical journals. A well-structured peer review system remains the best possible and most credible way to assess the

quality, relevance and integrity of written scientific and medical materials.

Publication of the potential benefits versus risks and costs posed by novel medical technologies is nowadays necessary across Europe, where scientific endeavour has a need to be accountable. Since 1961, when, as a reaction to the thalidomide scandal in Europe and Australia the US Food and Drug Administration forced pharmaceutical companies to provide safety and efficacy data prior to the commercialization of their products, such legislation has been adopted by most European registration agencies, including the European Medical Evaluation Agency. Provision of such data requires double-blind, controlled and randomized clinical trials performed before drugs (and radiopharmaceuticals) are introduced to the market, and these studies are also mandatory to provide evidence-based data of sufficient quality to convince health technology assessment agencies and other bodies to support clinical acceptance and adoption by health care systems. Obviously, these trials are expensive and difficult to perform, in particular for imaging products, and require close collaboration between academia, researchers and industry. With escalating costs, funding sources play a role in what is investigated. At the same time, authors may foresee direct or indirect financial benefit from their research, from patent licensing to translation into commercial products. As financial ties are not always visible, full disclosure of all funding sources of the research is mandatory for all EJNMMI papers. Although disclosure does not clarify all potential biases, it helps the reviewers and the readers to critically assess the appropriateness of the work and the relevance of the data.

The EJNMMI continued to develop in 2012. Over the year, the articles we published included: 26 Editorials, 191 Original Articles, 13 Review Articles, 20 Images of the Month, 18 Letters, 3 Guidelines and 8 Book Reviews. In all issues, invited expert editorial commentaries emphasized

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particular papers, offering opinion and putting them into appropriate perspective. The emergence of peptide receptor radionuclide imaging has opened innovative ways to diagnose and treat tumours through interaction with membrane receptors. The very high tumour to background ratio offered by this approach has provided a unique opportunity to map the distribution and assess the severity of the disease by SPECT and PET. Accordingly, a supplement on Radiolabelled Peptides in Diagnosis and Therapy, edited by Stefano Fanti and Adil Al-Nahhas [3], was published in March 2012, presenting the state-of-the-art techniques and discussing future developments in this important area. Altogether, the EJNMMI publications in 2012 resulted in more than 400,000 full-text hits on the journal's website! Increased page ranking in Google and other search engines will further enhance the visibility and accessibility of the published research.

The vibrancy and productivity of the field on a global scale are well reflected in the Original Articles published in EJNMMI in 2012, including examples of the best clinical and basic research performed in the field of nuclear medicine and molecular imaging. The articles published were selected from over 1300 submissions received during the year. The expert Review Articles, edited by Prof. Gianni Lucignani, addressed relevant and timely topics in the field. Prof. Luc Mortelmans selected the Images of the Month, delivering the most demonstrative and appealing information in just one picture or panel accompanied by a short description and supported by a few choice references. The published Guidelines reflected the work of the EANM committees and expert bodies and described appropriate procedures and best practice in the field. The Editorial Office, Associate Editors and Editorial Board continued to be committed to presenting to the journal's readers the most relevant and innovative contributions to the field of nuclear medicine and molecular imaging.

As space in the journal remains limited, the acceptance rate in EJNMMI stayed stable at 19 % for Original Articles. Publication in a high-rank journal follows a highly competitive process that involves prioritization after peer review. From a public perspective, coverage of science in the European media is mostly concerned with research reports published in respected, peer-reviewed journals. However, authors whose manuscript has been declined should never feel disgruntled and should seek other opportunities to publish their work. The new companion journal, *EJNMMI Research*, brings additional opportunities for publication of articles on clinical and basic research in nuclear medicine and molecular imaging, in particular those that address very technical issues or focus on basic research.

Like most other scientific journals, EJNMMI uses two reviewers to evaluate submitted manuscripts. The Editor-in-Chief, with the help of these experts, takes decisions based

upon criteria such as originality, importance, the appropriateness of the methods and illustrations, and the quality of the discussion. If personal or financial conflicts exist, the reviewers are asked to disclose them and decline the review. When reviewers provide conflicting reviews, a third reviewer or an Associate Editor is invited to help reach the appropriate editorial decision. Owing to the increasing number of submissions, the immediate decision to decline a paper is sometimes taken at the editorial office (21 % of submissions in 2012), in particular when the subject of the article is beyond the scope of the journal or the paper is judged by the editors to be better suited for another journal. When an article enters the review system, reviewers are invited within 2 days, with close to 3,000 peer experts invited to review for EJNMMI in 2012. The rapid reviewer selection process is based on the key words provided by the authors and on the identification of colleagues who have recently published on the same topic or have recognized expertise on the subject of the manuscript. Therefore all authors, including those disappointed by the editorial decisions, must recognize that they will be reviewers as well, and should accept all criticisms in a positive and constructive way. In the name of the Editorial Board, I wish to express my gratitude to those who participated in the review process in 2012, as the quality of the articles published in EJNMMI strongly depends on the ability of the peer reviewers to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the research and to help the authors to further improve their manuscripts.

Every year we must evaluate the journal's performance according to the standard metrics available. The average time from submission to first decision in 2012 was 23 days, the average time from submission to final acceptance was 65 days (including revision, re-submission and re-evaluation), and that from submission to rejection was 24 days. EJNMMI indices available in the Web of Science for 2012 continue to indicate that the journal is advancing. The 2011 impact factor stayed at 4.991 despite a higher number of published articles (2,251 citations of 451 articles, with 14 % of self-cites). Our immediacy index (citations of articles published in the same year) was 1.093, reflecting easier and more rapid online access to the EJNMMI articles. The cited half-life (number of publication years counting backwards from the current year which account for 50 % of current citations) was 5.7 years, and the total number of citations in 2010 increased to 10,491. The Eigenfactor Score was 0.02647 and the Article Influence Score was 1.321, among the highest in the field (Thompson Institute for Scientific Information: *Journal Citation Reports*).

The 2012 EJNMMI awards, given to acknowledge excellence in published clinical and basic research, were presented at the closing ceremony of the EANM'12 congress in Milan. An article by David Groheux and colleagues reporting on the correlation of high 18F-FDG uptake to clinical, pathological and biological prognostic factors in breast

cancer [4] was adjudged the best clinical paper of the year. The best basic science paper in 2012 was by Peter Knetsch and colleagues, on [68Ga]NODAGA-RGD for imaging $\alpha\beta3$ integrin expression [5]. The award for the most cited article (publication in 2008, citations between 2009 and 2011) went to a paper on the evaluation of [18F]-choline PET/CT for staging and restaging of prostate cancer by Daniela Husarik and colleagues [6].

The annual EANM congress, held this time in Milan, was a remarkable success. Despite the current economic crisis and the limitations on major congresses and events across Europe, the congress attracted over 5,500 attendees (more than ever), who enjoyed an excellent scientific program and a large number of lively industrial exhibits. Numerous abstracts yielded examples of innovative research that in many instances will result in full articles soon to appear in the scientific literature. The Young Investigator Meetings were again particularly lively, demonstrating that new talent is emerging to ensure the continuity and success of the field. As Editor-in-Chief, I eagerly await submission of such new manuscripts to EJMNI, where we guarantee a rapid and effective review process to facilitate publication of the best papers. I strongly encourage young authors to write manuscripts highlighting what is innovative and relevant, and to submit their work to high-ranking medical journals. I recommend them to read the reviewers' comments carefully, to pay attention to detail in preparing a revised version in detail, and to respect the editorial decisions.

The annual highlights lecture was given by Prof. Werner Langsteger, who is also writing a Review Article summarizing the highlights of EANM'12 and the major scientific contributions reported in Milan. All of us who attended the congress could sense that the nuclear medicine community is ready to deliver the innovation in research and clinical practice that is necessary to move the field forward.

As in previous years, I would like to close by expressing my sincere gratitude to those people who dedicate their time and professional expertise to the success of the journal: Carmina Jimenez, my tireless editorial assistant, who handled communication and correspondence in the review system (30,177 letters generated in 2011 !); David Roseveare, oversees an efficient and ordered production process; Claudia Schiffers, who is in charge of the journal's busy website and online system; and Sabine Ben Ghechir, who coordinates Springer's office in Heidelberg. Dear colleagues and readers, I trust that the *European Journal of Nuclear Medicine and Molecular Imaging* will continue to make good progress in 2013, and wish you all a very successful year!

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