The impact of 2011!

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Accepted: 21 July 2011 / Published online: 6 August 2011
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The most significant achievement for the journal this year was to be awarded an impact factor. While 0.698 appears quite modest by comparison with general medical publications, it must be recognized that “boutique” areas such as forensic pathology and science are considerably disadvantaged when comparisons occur with areas having much higher rates of publication such as medical genetics and oncology. The most appropriate way to assess the level of the journal, therefore, would be to compare it to others in the field where we find that not all internationally distributed forensic journals actually have impact factors, and those that do range from 0.29 to 2.9. *Forensic Science Medicine and Pathology* on its first listing has therefore been ranked ahead of journals that have been in the field for many years which is an excellent beginning, and should be a signal to authors who are considering submitting papers that the journal has a solid scientific reputation. The journal is also listed on PubMed, Scopus and Web of Science databases.

The purpose of this editorial is to both review the types of papers that have been published over the preceding year and to provide readers with an overview of selected submissions for 2011. The journal received a number of very high quality Review and Continuing Medical Education papers that dealt with a range of topics including genetic predisposition to sudden infant death syndrome [1], the radiological evaluation of suspected child abuse [2], the analysis of blood stain patterns [3], and on the application and limitations of forensic entomology [4]. Original papers

covered areas such as enzyme measurements to assess muscle damage from electronic control devices [5], the role of the forensic autopsy in evaluating complications of coronary artery bypass grafting [6], the possible role of spectrophotometry in assessing the age of bruises [7], and an analysis of bone injuries produced by low velocity ballistic impact [8]. The possibility of a link between traumatic subarachnoid hemorrhage and segmental medullary areterioopathy associated with point mutations in the type 3 procollagen gene (COL3A1) was raised in an intriguing series of four cases from Canada [9]. A case report on myocardial bridging included a literature review on this somewhat controversial entity [10]. The latter papers underscore the importance of simple observational case studies in our discipline [11].

Imaging papers had a diverse focus with computed tomography being used as a method of assessing maturity through imaging of the medial clavicular epiphysis [12], contrasting with the demonstration of postmortem skeletal findings in cases of intraoral gunshot [13]. The role of postmortem angiography was also reviewed [14]. Postmortem and disaster victim identification were included this year with an analysis of the use of permanent maxillary molar cusp areas in sex determination [15] and in a comparison of various methods for age determination in child victims of the South East Asian tsunami [16]. Genetic polymorphisms on the Y chromosome in a central Croatian population were also reported [17].

Pediatric forensic pathology had a number of contributions, beginning with an analysis of sudden unexpected death in South Africa from Prinsloo et al. [18] and including a study on the possible role of staphylococcal toxins in unexpected infant death [19]. Sudden unexpected death in children with epilepsy was reviewed [20] and an unusual finger print pattern was reported in children with acute lymphoblastic

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leukemia [21]. Case reports of possible mimickers of inflicted injury in children included von Willebrand disease [22], giant cell hepatitis [23] and adrenal neuroblastoma [24]. Multicystic encephalomalacia as a neurological sequela of inflicted head trauma was illustrated in a series of five infants from the Netherlands [25].

Toxicological papers included a comprehensive review of the pharmacogenetic effects of cytochrome P450 polymorphisms on serotonergic drugs [26] and an evaluation of ecstasy-associated deaths, with a demonstration of the difficulties that may occur in determining what constitutes a lethal level [27].

A Commentary by Pollanen [28] on the differential diagnosis of subdural hemorrhage in infancy has initiated a new section in the journal where responses to selected short overviews/commentaries will be invited. Case reports covered a very wide range of topics including lethal necrotizing fasciitis [29], Ehrlichiosis [30], Armanni-Ebstein phenomenon related to starvation [31], and Takotsubo cardiomyopathy [32]. Traumatic deaths resulted from drowning in paraffin wax [33] and an impacted button battery with a tracheoesophageal fistula [34]. Other sections such as *Images in Forensics* and *Differential Diagnosis* have also attracted interesting case studies and vignettes that have ranged from veterinary [35] to human forensic pathology [36]. Technical reports have provided analyses of saw marks on bones in cases of dismemberment [37]. Selected abstracts were also published from the 20th International Symposium on the Forensic Sciences that was held in Sydney Australia in September 2010 by the Australian New Zealand Forensic Science Society (ANZFSS).

It is very gratifying to report that it has been a rewardingly eventful year for the journal. The editors sincerely thank all of our reviewers for their excellent work and look forward to receiving further high quality submissions on a range of forensic science, medicine and pathology topics. Highlights for the coming year include a special Disaster Victim Identification issue that will have a series of reviews and original papers on all aspects of DVI, and a Commentary section with invited responses from international experts on a range of topical issues. In the wake of these achievements it appears that 2012 will prove to be an even more successful year for the “blue journal;” this is particularly so now that we have an impact factor and are registered on all of the major literature databases.

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