



50 years EJNM and EJMNI

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Don't Look Back was made famous by a late 1960's film directed by Pennebaker, covering Bob Dylan's concert tour in England [1].

Contrary to what is meant above, it is apposite, pertinent and suitable to review the outstanding success of our Publication. And looking back can give further impetus and strength to the future—as Henry Wager often told: The future lies ahead of us...

In 2003, after 13 years as Editor, I started my presentation to our international Editorial Board with a small pun, reminding us to stay positive, and underlining how much our field owned and still owns to particle physics:

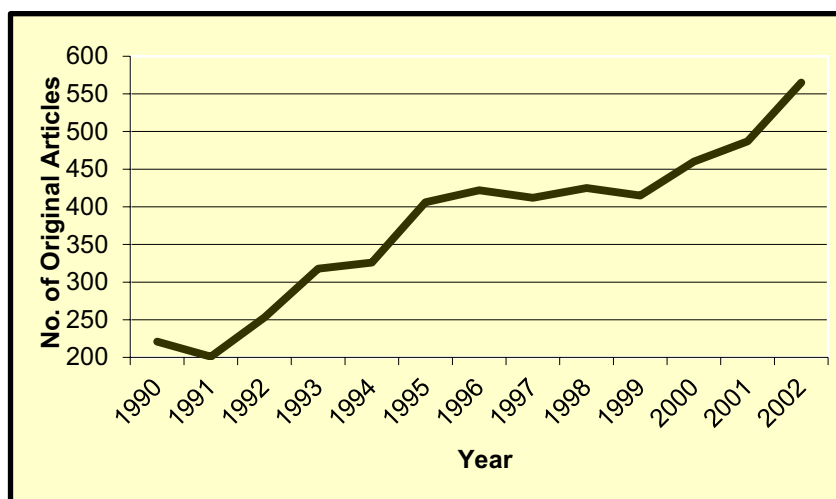
Two Hydrogen Atoms Meet. The first one cries: "I have lost my electron" His partner says: "Are you sure ? He responds: "I am positive".

Appointed in 1989, I began as Editor in 1990. The EJNM, founded in 1975, was based in Hannover, Germany. It had trouble in establishing itself; by 1989, its international reach was limited, its manuscript acceptance rate was far too high, mainly as the consequence of insufficient submitted material and its IP, at 0.853, did not reflect the potential of the publication. Publication delay was unacceptable, and, interestingly, much of the delay was caused by authors responding inadequately and late to the reviewers' comments. There was work to be done. The journal appeal had to be enhanced, type face changed and covers made attractive (new Covers in 1991, 1998, 2002 and 2020).

But the tools then available were very different. The post office was key, there were no electronic data transfers, no email and simply the goodwill of many. This would need to be harnessed. Establishing a new Editorial Board was essential, bringing new life and appeal to the journal with editorials, review articles and news and views. There were risks to be taken, raising the rejection rate to an acceptable international level whilst enduring insufficient copy (how does one fill the next issue), persuading the publisher despite the anxiety, that more printed pages would be needed, and not least, establishing a firm independent and quality vetting process. Quality manuscript reviews were essential if we aimed to succeed. Authors were to be reminded of their obligations towards a review process, late responses to revision manuscripts would not be accepted and the Editorial Board membership reminded of the absolute need to speed up the review process. There was therefore a clear race against the clock, shortening the time between manuscript submission and publication without the benefit of the WEBB, emails and so on, which offered the immediacy which is prevalent today. Every manuscript submission led to 7 to 10 separate postal items, and we became the best customer of the local post office. Running a busy university department, work was done at home, 3 h daily. It was fun but relentless, not 5 days a week, but 7 days a week. One-week holiday absence would lead to a huge pile arriving the following Monday. But it was exciting, interesting and fun.

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Gaining trust was also important. The review process had to be of the highest standard and (the few) complaints handled independently and fairly. Language barriers had to be dealt with. Editing approved manuscripts for formal publishing needed to be carried out, something which had not been done previously. A further battle won.

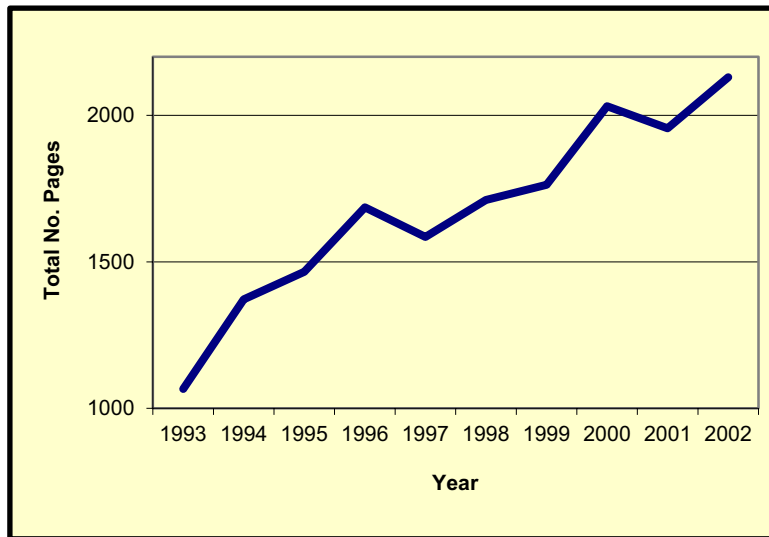
From time to time, we would seek the readers' thoughts about our published material and its different sections. It came mildly as a surprise that, apart from the original published papers, the Review Articles scored the highest. This encouraged me to maintain this monthly feature, to obtain an international list of contributors, and to ensure that language barriers would not constitute an insuperable obstacle. It took quite an effort to keep this regular submission, and it also took significant editorial commitment.

An Editor must also take risks. In selecting material (even unusual and unexpected) for publication, an Editor must stand by his/her decisions. Over the years, we learned that some of the most significant science works were rejected by Editors when submitted to their prestigious journals. And to seek insurance that one is on the right track, meeting 3 times a year with a group of colleagues in the field allowed one's activity to be tested and evaluated. Diplomacy was also needed when opportunities arose. So we published the abstracts of the WFNMB in 1992. Having realized the significance of sentinel lymph node detection to our field and to general surgery, we were able to publish the abstracts of the first World Congress of Sentinel Node Detection. This brought to the attention to

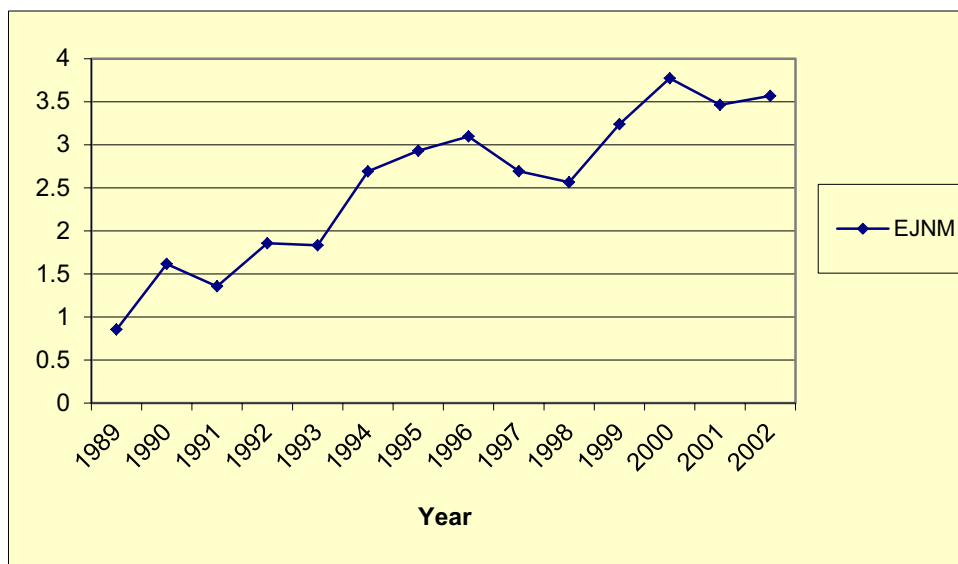
our community a major new area of collaborative work in clinical and surgical medicine (1999). And we thanked the publisher for appreciating the need to expand our readership and level of interest. In 2000, the EJNM was online for the first time.

Year	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Issues	12	12	12	12	12	14
Pages	1.331	1.243	1.487	1.575	1.542	1780
Blue pages	26	52	38	44	68	100
Abstracts	228	416	238	412	346	350
Total Pages	1.585	1.711	1.763	2.031	1.956	2.130

The impact factor (known as IF) is a measure of the success of a publication. Like all units of measurement, it is not perfect. And across disciplines, it is notoriously deficient. Do not compare a biology journal IF with an IF from a maths or physics journal. But it gains some relevance when one groups journals in fields of endeavour, such as imaging. I recall that when we started, there were some 80+ imaging journals listed under the JSR/SCI—Journal of Scientific Ranking/Science Citation Index. We were at or near the bottom of the list, but in time, we also won this battle, as can be seen by one of the charts. By the year 2000, we even surpassed the IF of our nearest competitor, the JNM from the US Society of Nuclear Medicine. I wish to record here that publications from the USA rarely cited journals from Europe or other continents. This leads to a continental self-citation process, which is very difficult to deal with. But it can be done, and my great friend and successor, Prof Carrio, also maintained and grew the success of the EJNM.



Impact Factor EJMNI



The readership of our journal needed expanding. We are, in reality, a small medical speciality, but with remarkable scientific and medical output. What is overlooked by many outside our field is the multidisciplinary nature of our endeavour, involving physics, computing, data analysis and most significantly, organic and radiochemistry. Hence, our scope is significant. With this in mind, it was relevant that our publication would be accessed by a much wider readership, and a contract would be made available to the growing membership of the European Association of Nuclear Medicine, the EANM. Diplomacy was required once again, and a contract was signed between the Publisher Springer

Verlag and the EANM Board in 1998. The image below shows the moment of the signature, involving Dr Ute Heilmann for Springer, the then EANM Treasurer Professor Pauwels and myself, then President of the EANM. With the help of the publisher, we also obtained permission to send 50 free annual subscription of the journal to other European areas where for political reasons, the journal remained absent. This failed because it seemed impossible to ensure that 50 individual addresses could be identified, ensuring the EJNM would achieve its correct destination, and not lost in a general address...Hence some initiatives failed, despite trying.



By the turn of the century, the EJNM became online, with a first publication in 2000. The title was expanded to European Journal of Nuclear Medicine and Molecular Imaging. We had 13 issues annually, often with an additional supplement. A new section on controversies was added and edited by Prof Markus Schwaiger and a new section on molecular imaging edited by the late Prof Sam Gambhir. The data on manuscript handling was as followed: same day acknowledgement > 90%, next day start review process > 85%, response-authors in 6 weeks > 80%, from approval to online in weeks.

After 13+ years as Editor, I felt that the time had come. I had the utmost pleasure to work with a hugely supportive team at Springer and a small team of colleagues who helped, Professors McCready, Pauwels and the late Lucignani and the ongoing support of a superb Board of Editors.

There was a need to reflect, to evaluate further needs of the journal and to reevaluate my own commitments and priorities. My old hospital, The Middlesex Hospital, where I first moved in 1971 to start a University of London MSc program in Nuclear Medicine, was about to be demolished or sold, to make way for a new building in Euston Road. Hence, my entire academic and service department would have to be moved and rehoused in a new building. A huge commitment, trying at the same time, to expand the senior academic staff of my Institute. This was clearly not compatible with the effort, time and commitment the EJNMMI now required. It was time to relinquish my Editorial role, time for new blood and new impulses for the Journal [2, 3].

This was not an easy decision; I had hugely enjoyed the privilege and responsibilities of my tenure and

Editorship. But the decision was unavoidable and made so much easier in the knowledge that my friend and successor, Professor Ignasi Carrio, would expand and further enhance the statue of the EJNMMI. The online submission facility led to an explosion of submitted material. New challenges would await the new Editor. As we now gaze into the future, we all see how the success of the EJNMMI is here to stay.

Data availability Not applicable.

Declarations

Ethical approval Institutional Review Board approval was not required because the paper is an editorial.

Informed consent Not applicable.

Conflict of interest The authors declare no competing interests.

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