Editorial

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I wish to announce that I have decided to step down as Editor-in-Chief at the end of 2021, as I feel that it is time to hand over the role to the next generation of academically active pediatric surgeons. It has been a great honour and a privilege to have served as Editor-in-Chief of *Pediatric Surgery International* for the last 20 years.

Pediatric Surgery International was the brainchild of a dynamic and visionary leader in our speciality, Professor Alois F. Scharli from Lucerne, Switzerland. He realized that there was only one Journal in our speciality in the English language and that there was a need for another journal. He met with Professor Michael Höllwarth and Professor Siegfried Hofmann von Kap-herr in Oberurg, Austria in 1984 to discuss further his proposal. They all agreed that the time was right to have a new journal and this would benefit pediatric surgeons worldwide, both in the developed and the developing world. Alois was the founding Editor-in-Chief of *Pediatric Surgery International*. In 1985, he invited me to join the Editorial Board of the Journal. The first issue was published in March 1986. He retired in 2001 and handed over the role of Editor-in-Chief to me. For me, personally, it was a privilege to have known and worked with such an extraordinary person (Fig. 1). I learned from him about the appreciation of the attention to detail, teamwork and organizational skills which are essential for the trouble free management of any journal.

There have been two major highlights of my professional career. First, the worldwide group of my 81 Research Fellows, who spent 2–4 years at the research laboratory in the National Research Centre in Dublin from 1985 to 2019. I spent many long and happy hours with these bright young men and women, who provided me with great intellectual

stimulation, excitement and inspiration. The shared experience has produced much research, mutual respect and a strong bond. They became part of my extended family. It has been such an immense joy to see them grow and become successful professors and academic pediatric surgeons. Working with these Research Fellows has been the greatest highlight of my academic career.

The second major highlight of my academic career has been the honour to lead *Pediatric Surgery International* as Editor-in-Chief for 20 years. During my tenure as Editor-in-Chief, dramatic changes have occurred in the publication process. The editorial office has evolved from receiving manuscripts by mail to a totally paperless environment with electronic submission, acceptance and production process. During this period, the Journal became the official publication of six prestigious pediatric surgical societies, resulting in significant increase in article output, all the while insisting to maintain the high quality of the accepted articles. Despite growth and rapid time to publication, the Journal has been published in a timely and effective manner.

Despite all its limits, the impact factor remains the main parameter to rank the value of a journal. When I took over the role of Editor-in-Chief of *Pediatric Surgery International* from Prof. Alois Scharli, my main aim was to increase the impact factor of the Journal by improving the quality of the scientific articles. When I began my tenure as Editor-in-Chief, the impact factor of *Pediatric Surgery International* was 0.645 and it has been increasing each year. Currently, the impact factor of our journal is 1.827. To further improve the impact factor of our Journal, we must continue to put major emphasis on the quality of accepted manuscripts, as well as focus on inviting more Review articles from the Editorial Board Members and other experts on various topics in pediatric surgery and pediatric urology.

During the past years, the profile and stature of *Pediatric Surgery International* has profoundly changed. Many have contributed to the success of the Journal. The Editorial Board has worked hard to give excellent reviews in a timely fashion. I would like to thank each and every past and present member of the Editorial Board for evaluating the quality

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Fig.1 Professor Alois Scharli and Professor Prem Puri in Lucerne in 2001

of the submitted manuscripts. Peer review for publication is fundamental to evaluate the quality and priority of manuscripts submitted to a journal.

During my tenure, I was very fortunate that I worked with two very capable Co-Editor-in-Chiefs, Professor Arnold G. Coran (2001–2017) and Professor Agostino Pierro (2018–2021). I thank them for their dedication, commitment and diligence which helped to improve the visibility and impact of *Pediatric Surgery International*. My special thanks to Agostino, an outstanding clinical scientist, whose contribution in recent years has opened us further to authors and readership from United States and Canada. Furthermore, he has actively encouraged his Fellows from his busy lab to submit good clinical and basic science research to *Pediatric Surgery International*.

The vast majority of editors of clinical journals are full-time clinicians or clinical scientists who provide their service with little or no financial compensation. During my tenure, I handled nearly ten thousand manuscripts, excluding the manuscripts originating from the various pediatric surgical societies affiliated with our journal. I gratefully acknowledge the kind support and sacrifice of my wife, Veena and children, Abir, Anita and Niki for the many times I was not available on various nights and weekends while busy with the Journal's work.

During my tenure as Editor-in-Chief, I had the pleasure of working with four Springer Publishing Editors, Gabriele Schroder (2001–2013), Sverre Klemp (2013–2017), David Stanmore (2017–2019), Markus Bartels (2019–to date) and several Editorial Assistants. I wish to express my gratitude to all the four Publishing Editors of Springer as well as all the Editorial Assistants for their support, advice and help during

Fig.2 Professor Agostino Pierro, Professor Prem Puri and Professor Tomas Wester, the incoming Editor-in-Chief at the EUPSA Congress in Athens, Greece, September 2021

my tenure as the Editor-in-Chief of the Journal. I also wish to express my gratitude to Ms. Louise McCrossan, Editorial Assistant in Dublin office for several years.

I would like to give my very special thanks to Gabriele Schroder, who not only worked longest as the Springer Publishing Editor with me but introduced me to the Springer Books Publishing Department. This collaboration has produced four very successful books. The widely acclaimed *Pediatric Surgery* (Springer Surgery Atlas Series) had its 2nd edition published in 2019, the 4th edition of *Hirschsprung Disease* was published in 2019, the Volume 1 of Major Reference Book (*Encyclopedia of Pediatric Surgery*) was published in 2020 and the Volume 2 in 2021, the Volume 3 (*Pediatric Urology*) will be published in 2022 and the 2nd edition of *Pediatric Surgery—Diagnosis and Management* is currently in production.

Finally, I am thrilled that Prof. Tomas Wester, Professor of Pediatric Surgery at Karolinska Institute, Stockholm, Sweden and the immediate past President of EUPSA, will replace me as the Editor-in-Chief of *Pediatric Surgery International* (Fig. 2). I have known Tomas for over 20 years and followed his career and progress with interest. He has a warm and cheerful personality, as a consequence of which he is liked and respected by everyone in our speciality. Besides leadership qualities, Tomas is well-versed in clinical and translational research. He has a good team in Stockholm doing excellent clinical and basic science research. I am sure that the Journal will continue to grow and improve under his capable direction. I wish him all the best.

Prem Puri.
Editor-in-chief.

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