

Hail and Farewell

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Over the last 3 years, the *Journal of Bioethical Inquiry* (*JBI*) has been gradually building up a team of specialist Associate Editors. With this issue we welcome one more into the fold: Michael Selgelid has been appointed Associate Editor for Biosecurity, Biosurveillance and Infectious Diseases. He is currently Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for Applied Philosophy and Public Ethics and the Menzies Centre for Health Policy at the Australian National University. Dr Selgelid's research fills an important lacuna in contemporary bioethics surrounding the ethics of infectious diseases [1]. His involvement will help make future issues of the *JBI* more relevant for bioethics in the developing world where infectious diseases remain the leading causes of human death and suffering. Selgelid's work is no less relevant to post-industrial societies which are increasingly aware of both the persistent threat of pandemic illness, and the potential security threats posed by knowledge and expertise in the biological sciences.

Our regular peer-reviewed content includes a landmark article which seamlessly blends the genres of political and cultural critique with narrative of personal

experience [2]. The publication of this paper signals the *JBI*'s commitment to foster interdisciplinary research, and to represent the voice of patients/consumers who can reflectively and critically elucidate the personal impact of illness, and the complex institutions, policies and practices which have come to surround it in modern life.

This issue of the *JBI* also contains a special forum on Human Tissue compiled and introduced by our Associate Editor (Law), Cameron Stewart. The forum as a whole presents the work of outstanding legal and ethical scholars in our region who address the question of whether in law we own - and whether we *should* seek to own - the tissues and organs which are separated from our bodies by acts of donation or by less visible processes (e.g. accumulation of "spare tissue" in bio-banks). The Forum highlights the importance for biomedical research of public trust and some notion of the "biological commons" in matters of policy, and it also shows how both may be disrupted if the latter is reduced to a market comprised only of private property interests.

Given that this ninth issue of the *JBI* marks the culmination of 3 years' output, the editorial office has compiled some statistics based on the first 100 manuscripts that have passed through the peer review process. These include figures on gender distribution of authors and reviewers which complement figures on the geopolitical distribution of authors and reviewers that were published in the previous issue [3], and they

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provide additional benchmarks against which the *JBI* can measure its future performance.

- Of the first 100 manuscripts, half (51%) were rejected or withdrawn after review.
- The average time from submission to final decision was 18 weeks (4.5 months).
- The average time from submission to publication was 37 weeks (about 9 months).
- Of those who reviewed the first 100 manuscripts, 43% were female and 57% were male.
- Of those who authored the first 100 manuscripts, 46% were female and 54% were male.
- Of authors with manuscripts accepted for publication, 45% were female and 55% were male.
- Of all female authors who submitted manuscripts, 51% had manuscripts accepted for publication; the corresponding figure for male authors was 55%.

This issue of the *JBI* also represents a personal landmark for me. Unfortunately, I will no longer be able to continue in the role of Editor-in-Chief. The workload increases with the journal's rapid development to a degree that I can no longer sustain alongside the demands of other academic responsibilities. I have therefore tendered my resignation as Editor-in-Chief. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the widening community that supports the *JBI* for the privilege of being part of this exciting new endeavour. I am confident that the journal is well-positioned to

sustain itself into the future. The *JBI* It has attracted contributions from well over 100 different authors, and now has a database of over 200 reviewers. The *JBI* also has an international publisher; a new online manuscript management system; a set of policies on which to build; an Editorial board which represents three key organisations in our region, and an International Advisory board and editorial team that represent a variety of disciplines.

The *JBI* is currently preparing a special issue on bioethics in Asia. Beyond that, further themed issues are planned relating to the specialties represented by our team of Associate Editors. Finally, we plan to shift in 2008 to a publication schedule of four issues per year. I trust this will please the *JBI*'s authors and readers to the same extent that it tests the mettle of the editorial team.

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