

Recent Changes and Future Directions for *Annals of Behavioral Medicine*

Christopher R. France, Ph.D.

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Although the current *Annals of Behavioral Medicine* editorial team has been handling all new submissions since October 2009, this issue represents the first time that most of the articles appearing in the journal have been handled by the new team of editors. Accordingly, we have chosen this occasion to update the journal's masthead and to officially introduce the individuals who provide the expertise necessary to accomplish careful and timely evaluation of the wide range of submissions that are received by the journal. The Associate Editors are George Bishop (National University of Singapore), Laura M. Bogart (Children's Hospital Boston and Harvard Medical School), Angela Bryan (University of New Mexico), John W. Burns (Rush University), Louise C. Masse (University of British Columbia), Kevin S. Masters (Syracuse University), Susan Michie (University College London), Justin M. Nash (Alpert Medical School of Brown University & The Miriam Hospital), Tracey A. Revenson (The Graduate Center of the City University of New York), Jamie L. Rhudy (The University of Tulsa), and Keith E. Whitfield (Duke University). I am grateful to these outstanding scholars and I thank them for their ongoing efforts on behalf of the journal. I am also grateful to Dr. Alan Christensen for his help in ensuring a smooth transition of editorial teams, and, most importantly, for the dedication and vision that he brought to the position of Editor-in-Chief over the last 5 years. Alan's continual focus on promoting the best science in behavioral medicine is a primary reason that the journal remains one of the most visible and highly cited publications in our field.

C. R. France (✉)
Ohio University,
Athens, OH, USA
e-mail: france@ohio.edu

So what does the future hold for *Annals*? Given the journal's current and past success, it seems prudent to tread lightly in terms of major adjustments. At the same time, however, the journal must continue to grow and to provide a forum for important and exciting new theoretical ideas, research methods, and empirical findings. With these competing forces in mind, I would like to outline a few long-term goals for the journal and to highlight recent changes that are already shaping our day-to-day editorial decisions.

Long-term Goals

My primary long-term goal for *Annals of Behavioral Medicine* is to enhance the breadth of content represented in the journal. Historically, behavioral medicine has had broad roots that span diverse topic areas and incorporate multiple levels of analysis. Because I believe that breadth and depth are fundamental strengths of our discipline, I want to ensure that the journal reflects the full spectrum of behavioral medicine and avoids becoming narrowly defined by any particular topic area or level of inquiry. In one respect, this is perhaps the most conservative goal that I could possibly have—I'm calling for submissions that actually fit the broad aims and scope of our journal! However, this position is far from neutral. In the face of a growing concentration of submissions within particular areas, I believe that it is critical that our authors, reviewers, and editors recognize that *Annals of Behavioral Medicine* is committed to promoting a wide-ranging view of our discipline. I will play an active role in this effort by encouraging invited review papers that showcase biological, psychological, and social factors in established and emerging areas of behavioral medicine.

A second goal is to expand the journal's reach so that we are speaking not only to fellow scientists and clinicians, but also to the general public. As we approach the end of APA's Decade of Behavior, it is critical that we use the momentum generated by this campaign to continue to advance the Society of Behavioral Medicine's core mission of "Better Health through Behavior Change." To this end, we will be increasing our efforts to develop news releases to highlight significant and innovative articles that we publish, and we will be asking our authors to provide brief, lay summaries of their articles so that their primary findings can be accompanied by a synopsis that is easily accessible by non-scientists. Further, with the recent launch of the Society of Behavioral Medicine's new journal, "*Translational Behavioral Medicine: Practice, Policy, Research*," we are looking forward to potential synergies that were previously not available. For example, the unique relationship between these journals allows us to consider initiatives that might simultaneously enhance the content and impact of both journals by pairing publication of a manuscript in *Annals of Behavioral Medicine* with a companion piece in *Translational Behavioral Medicine*. These are early days for our sister publication and I eagerly invite our readers to submit their ideas for collaborations between the two publications.

A third goal is to encourage submissions that promote a greater understanding of the contribution of psychosocial and cultural factors to health disparities, and the role that behavioral and psychological interventions may play in helping to reduce these disparities. In line with the primary long-term goal of encouraging the broadest possible perspective for the journal, our focus on health disparities research will encourage submissions that address racial, ethnic, sexual orientation, gender, and socioeconomic disparities across diverse disease conditions, risk/protective factors, and intervention modalities. In the short term, we will issue calls for papers that will appear in special sections of the journal; however, it is hoped that our enhanced focus will ultimately result in a greater proportion of our regular submissions providing information that addresses the challenge of health disparities.

Recent Changes

Before the new editorial team began its term in October 2009, we conducted a complete review of existing journal

policies and made a number of updates and revisions to bring *Annals of Behavioral Medicine* in line with guidelines put forth by the Council of Science Editors and the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICJME). Updated editorial guidelines, reviewer guidelines, and instructions to authors can be found on the journal's website (www.springer.com/medicine/journal/12160). One of the more important and potentially far-reaching changes relates to the implementation of clinical trial registration. Specifically, to be consistent with the ICJME requirement that clinical trials be entered in a public registry before the onset of participant enrollment, *Annals of Behavioral Medicine* now has an official requirement for registration of clinical trials as a condition of consideration for publication. Online registration sites allow investigators to record key study details such as sources of support, study design, and independent and dependent variables. Because this information remains a public record that is easily accessible on the internet, it allows editors, reviewers, and readers to determine whether a report of a clinical trial is faithful to the original design and provides an accurate account of the primary and secondary outcomes. Free registration can be accomplished online at clinicaltrials.gov or through a variety of similar sites around the world (see www.who.int/ictpr).

A second policy change that is worthy of highlight is the establishment of a masked review policy. Submissions to the journal now must include a separate title page that does not identify the authors or their affiliations so that this information is no longer available to reviewers. Although there will always be challenges to anonymity in the review process because authors frequently publish in narrow areas of expertise or include self-citations, a masked review process is a relatively simple precaution that can help reduce potential bias in manuscript evaluations.

Finally, as I contemplate the collective efforts of the many authors, reviewers, and editors who have contributed to the development of *Annals of Behavioral Medicine*, I am truly honored to have been entrusted with the responsibility of promoting the continued success and visibility of our journal. I look forward to writing a new chapter in the journal's history, and I welcome and encourage the talented and creative scientists who make up our readership to view *Annals of Behavioral Medicine* as their first choice when it comes to publishing basic and applied research that integrates biological, psychosocial, and behavioral contributors to health.