The scientific scene is changing rapidly. In the cardiovascular field, to which CARDIOLOGIA is
devoted by name and tradition, basic research now originates equally well in a laboratory or in a
clinical environment. The traditional barriers between physiologist and surgeon, biochemist and
cardiologist, pharmacologist and clinician have largely disappeared. As knowledge expands,
specialization provides an answer. In modern cardiology, however, compartmentalization no
longer develops along the lines of the classical disciplines. The present boundaries are more
often those of a particular approach (hemodynamics, electrocardiology, bio-engineering), with
normal and abnormal function considered simultaneously. In any one field of cardiovascular
research, the younger investigators are increasingly familiar with concepts and techniques from
various disciplines of science. The sophistication of their research, expressed in the manuscripts
they submit for publication, would alone call for an evolution of editorial mechanisms.
But there is more. Because societies invest heavily in medical research, the mere volume of
reports presented for permanent recording and dissemination grows exponentially. Manuscripts
accumulate on the desk of editors. With a backlog of recognized contributions waiting in line for
publication, exciting new reports are often unduly delayed. No one single journal can assume the
responsibility of covering entirely a given field or research, and of serving alone an ever
expanding scientific community. When the number of informative, well documented, clearly
presented reports exceeds the capacity of a journal, a choice must be made. The editors must
‘have the authority to, and take the respon-sibility for, accepting or rejecting manuscripte on the
basis of the policies established for the journal’. To avoid penalizing the authors of contributions
which cannot be accepted and permit an early publication elsewhere, a decision of principle must
be reached on each individual manuscript soon after receipt. For
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Editorial
CARDIOLOGIA, the editors set as their goal to inform the authors within six weeks. Once a
research paper is definitely accepted, our publisher strives for having it in print within three
months.
The editors are not only concerned with the sheer number of papers submitted; they must also
contend with the length and the substance of individual manuscripts. It is their role to uphold the
standards of the journal and to protect the readers from unnecessary exposure to premature,
unsound or repetitive publications. However reluctantly, they must also trim texts and
illustrations to reduce the bulk of acceptable manuscripts. Experience indicates that most articles
can be shortened by as much as one third without losing a bit of information. The trimming
process should ideally take place within the laboratory of the investigator. However, this is more
easily done with a text other than one’s own. For that reason authors often submit their
manuscript to experienced colleagues before sending it to a journal. They realize that ‘no paper is likely to suffer from the tender or rough attention that a pair of critical eyes bestows on it before publication’. When this phase of scientific writing has been omitted, it becomes the duty of the editors to provide it by the referee system. The editors solicit the opinion of colleagues because of the knowledge and experience they possess. The referee’s task is to read the manuscript and to answer specific questions as to the originality of the research and the reliability of the methods used. Often the referee will express an opinion about the clarity of the presentation, the validity of the logic, and the existence of alternate interpretations. In short, the referees ‘serve as test readers at a time when papers can still be altered to the benefit of author, journal and science’. With this expert information in hand, the editors, who cannot be expected to have knowledge of the background and methods pertinent to every paper submitted, can reach a final judgment and notify the authors as to outright acceptance, demand for revision, or rejection of the manuscript. The quality of CARDIOLOGIA will be an expression of the research skill of its contributors, of the sound judgment of its editorial board, and of the devotion of its editors. We assure our readers that no effort will be spared to maintain the highest level of scholarship in cardiovascular research. For that purpose, we will appreciate suggestions and criticism at any time.

P. M. G.