Editorial

OBESITY FACTS – a Success Story

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OBESITY FACTS – THE EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF OBESITY celebrates its 5th anniversary! This event allows us to pause to review our brief history, our accomplishments and to predict what the future has in store for us.

The first issue of OBESITY FACTS was published in March 2008. We have published over 200 articles, including 139 original articles, 32 reviews, 5 case reports and 29 editorials, on all areas of obesity-related research. We would like to thank all authors who have allowed us to review their work and in particular those whose work was published in our journal. The number of articles submitted to OBESITY FACTS has increased substantially over the past years (fig. 1.); this development has required us to become more selective (fig. 2); unfortunately, several papers need to be rejected without initiation of a peer-review process. Others are turned down by the reviewers. We know that a lot of efforts go into a study and its publication and thus truly regret that only a proportion of submitted papers can be accepted. On the other hand, the increment in submitted manuscripts clearly indicates that OBESITY FACTS has established itself.

We would like to take the opportunity to thank all Associate Editors and Editorial Board members, some of whom have contributed substantially to the success of the journal by their handling of many manuscripts. They have usually chosen two reviewers for every paper and finally suggested acceptance or rejection of a paper. Our editors cover the major fields in obesity research; depending on their fields some have been drawn upon more often than others entailing that the work load has not been distributed equally.

We also thank the more than 400 reviewers, whose contribution cannot be ranked highly enough. While suggestions abound as to how to reform the review process (see for e.g. www.nature.com/nature/peerreview/debate/), the system has remained fairly stable over time. Thus, reviewers are usually not in any way reimbursed for their work nor has open review caught on to a substantial degree with the exception of single mostly online

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Fig. 1. Manuscripts submitted to OBESITY FACTS.

Fig. 2. OBESITY FACTS – rejection rate.

journals. We have single reviewers/editors who make their name known to the authors. The majority however remains undisclosed. As presumably every editor knows some reviewers are more reliable than others; some require ‘chasing’, some invest a lot of time to improve an article and sometimes even to let the authors know what they should do prior to submission to another journal. This work behind the scene represents the core of any journal – thank you!

Karger Publishers provide all the service and support commonly expected of an international publishing house. What distinguishes them is the individual commitment and personal dedication by the longstanding members of staff towards editors and authors. During an intermittent period over the past year there had occurred single serious delays in the processing of manuscripts which were due to the exceeding rise in submissions. By now measures have been taken to avoid such problems in the future. The economic side of

establishing and running a journal is another huge challenge. To cover the running costs a journal requires a constant source of income via subscriptions and advertisements. Unfortunately, this is easier said than done in the current state of obesity research and clinical obesiology.

Where does OBESITY FACTS stand in scientific terms? We have managed to continuously cover various aspects of obesity research, e.g., bariatric surgery, epidemiology, psychological and psychiatric aspects, endocrinology, etc. Furthermore, we have successfully launched one special issue on stigmatization (The Burden of the Burden: Current Advances in Weight Stigma Research, edited by Anja Hilbert) and one special issue with a main focus on BMI tracking (edited by Thorkild Sørensen and Johannes Hebebrand). A further special issue on food addiction will be published this year (edited by Julian Mercer). Additionally 5 supplement issues were published between 2008 and 2011. Three of them contained congress abstracts of the annual congresses of the European Association for the Study of Obesity (EASO) and the German Obesity Society (Deutsche Adipositas-Gesellschaft; DAG), two other focused on bariatric surgery (Progress in Surgery for Obesity and Metabolic Disorders. 5th Frankfurt Meeting, Frankfurt/M., November 13–14, 2008, edited by Rudolf A. Weiner; Surgery for Obesity and Metabolic Disorders. 6th Frankfurter Meeting, Frankfurt/M., November 18–19, 2010, edited by Rudolf A. Weiner and Sylvia Weiner).

One milestone in the success story of OBESITY FACTS is its acceptance in Medline as early as November 2009. Because the listing has been carried out retrospectively, all articles ever published in OBESITY FACTS are searchable via Medline.

In 2011, the first regular impact factor for OBESITY FACTS could be calculated. The impact factor 2010 of OBESITY FACTS was 1.1. Obviously, there is room for expansion, but at the same time we need to realize that an impact factor of 1.1 is a promising start for a novel scientific journal. Among the 70 journals listed in the field of Nutrition/Dietetics, OBESITY FACTS holds rank 54 in 2010, and among the 116 journals in the field of Endocrinology/Metabolism the journal ranks as 100.

From the beginning on we have built up a strategic alliance with the European Association for the Study of Obesity; OBESITY FACTS is the official journal of EASO. Vojtech Hainer and Thorkild Sørensen were both invaluable for initiating this alliance which led to our subtitle ‘The European Journal of Obesity’. The current President of EASO Jean Michel Oppert and the Scientific Advisory Board are in contact with the editors to promote obesity research in Europe. In the recent past we published three editorials which were prepared or applied for by the Scientific Advisory Board. The topics covered included a critical assessment of obesity-related research (Blundell et al., October, 2010), an introduction to the future EU research program Horizon 2020 (Mattias Anderson, August 2011) and a response of EASO (Oppert et al., December 2011) as to how to potentially best address this novel program. We will shortly publish a special section that includes articles of the three awardees of the EASO Young Investigator Award in 2011. The ties with EASO will undoubtedly continue to strengthen; we perceive this alliance as a unique opportunity to promote obesity research in Europe. The German Obesity Society has also endorsed OBESITY FACTS as its official research journal; other European societies, like the International Federation for the Surgery of Obesity and Metabolic Disorders – European Chapter (IFSO-EC), which is affiliated with OBESITY FACTS, are welcome.

Under the ever-growing influence of the internet, the reception of the journal has gradually shifted to the digital environment via net-based systems. This has led to our decision to publish OBESITY FACTS as an online-only journal as of 2012.

We welcome your input as how to improve our journal and look forward to continuously receive your articles which describe your research or which review current topics in obesity-related research.