Valete

Publish or perish is one of the mantras of modern science. Indeed, both the number and the quality of publications is an essential indicator for universities and funding agencies when it comes to evaluating scientific achievements and ultimately, therefore, for the development of scientific careers. While commensuration (converting qualities into a simple metric such as a cumulative impact factor) favoured by administrations must be considered insufficient to reflect the conceptuality and creativity of an individual scientist, his or her publications matter.

It can, therefore, come as no surprise that the number of scientific journals is huge and the number of published articles even greater. According to the International Association of Scientific, Technical and Medical Publishers (STM) the number of scientific journals exceeds 33,000 when only anglophone journals with peer review are considered [1]. The number of articles is estimated to exceed 3 million per year [1]. If one envisages that, according to the same report, scientists of all disciplines read on average an estimated 250 articles per year [1] due attention of every publication seems difficult.

Obviously, novelty and scientific quality are highly significant in this context. Although many alternative approaches have been either discussed or already used, most journals (among them JVR) rely on a peer review system which, apparently for the benefit of its authors (but evidently also of the publishers), is based on the voluntary investment of time and expertise by their fellow scientists. In this context, editors act as arbitrator between reviewers and authors and must try to give justice to the hard work of individual authors whilst at the same time trying to guarantee high standards, intellectual integrity and the scientific profile of the journal they have the honour to serve. This demanding task has its ups and downs but I have found it all in all stimulating and very rewarding. My

work for JVR has only been possible thanks to the support of past and present members of the editorial board and consulting editors (with special thanks to Gerald Meininger), as well as the many expert reviewers whom I wish to thank once again most sincerely for their unstinting support. My personal thanks go in addition to JVR's editorial assistant, Mrs. Eva Aralikatti, who excellently supported me throughout my term as editor.

I always felt that it was important that the journal was embedded in the environment of the European Society for Microcirculation (ESM). I think that, in the current discussion on changes of the peer review system [2], open access and integrating publications and underlying data [3], the interaction of a specialised journal like JVR with a society which competently represents the discipline via its scientific members and officers is of paramount significance. Based on this conviction I wholeheartedly support an even closer interaction between ESM and JVR in the future.

After many years of service for JVR it is now time for me to hand over the torch to a new editor and I am delighted that Prof. Brant Isakson of the University of Virginia, a renowned vascular physiologist, will take on the challenge. He will no doubt give JVR the new impulses which are so important for its future success.

Ulrich Pohl, Munich

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