Editorial

As holds for all scientific journals, the editorial policy of *Ophthalmic Research* must by definition be conservative; its main aim being publication of high-quality manuscripts in the field of ophthalmic and eye research. Ever since its foundation in 1970 by Prof. D.F. Cole (London), Prof. G. Naumann (Hamburg) and Prof. O. Hockwin (Bonn), the journal has put main emphasis on the relation between clinical ophthalmology and biomedical research. As no other ophthalmic journal, *Ophthalmic Research* has kept this balance between basic and clinical research over the years. This emphasis proved to be successful for more than 30 years and it is my opinion that this should remain the policy for the coming years. It warrants that the published outcome of basic research is closely related to clinical entities as for instance inherited and age-related lens and retinal diseases, glaucoma, immune-related diseases, etc. It has kept the journal on a track which might in the near future be beneficial for a rational approach to cure or prevent eye diseases and has distracted the journal away from the opinion that the eye is just and only an excellent model to study various kinds of biological problems, however interesting these problems might be. It also kept the journal away from the idea that most ophthalmic problems can be solved by improved surgical intervention however ingenious these interventions are. One of the disadvantages of this policy is that the readership of the journal is somewhat restricted to ophthalmologists interested in basic research and medical biologists interested in ophthalmologic problems. Despite this, the readership has remained rather constant over the years and the citation score has even improved in the last couple of years.

My predecessor, the late Prof. Hockwin (Bonn), was the stable factotum for more than 25 years and when I took over the managing editorship in October 1994, I realized that it was unlikely that I would serve for such a long time. Developments in both basic and clinical eye and ophthalmic research are rapidly accelerating and after some time one feels that others more familiar with new clinical and basic approaches should take over the responsibility for the continuation of the journal. That was the main reason why my successor Prof. Uwe Pleyer and myself, after consultation with editorial board members, decided to change the structure of the board by introducing section editors which all are specialists in their specific fields and therefore have a much better overview of recent progress in the various fields of eye and ophthalmic research than any individual can have. I wish Prof. Uwe Pleyer, the section editors and the board members all the best for the coming years to the benefit of *Ophthalmic Research* and ultimately to the benefit of the eye and ophthalmic research community.

A most stable factor over the years has been the publishing house S. Karger AG. Both Dr.h.c Thomas Karger and more recently Steven Karger have constantly shown great interest in the scientific status and progress of the journal. Their regular discussions were very helpful and their support for improvements and streamlining of the journal are gratefully acknowledged. I will always remember them as dedicated publishers at the service of medical research in general and ophthalmic research in particular and as amiable individuals caring for their editors. *Ophthalmic Research* had and still has the flavour of high-quality editing and printing and especially the reproduction of figures and micrographs are of superior quality. This can only be achieved through the constant and efficient care of all the people involved in the editing and production of the journal. Especially the editorial office did an excellent job by editing the many papers from authors who for understandable reasons had problems with the English language.

Peer reviewing is nowadays the golden standard for journals. This implies that for each manuscript at least two knowledgeable reviewers have to be found willing to spend their time to critically and constructively referee a manuscript in a relatively short period of time. We all know that this is time-consuming and distracts from our own work. I am sometimes surprised that so many colleagues were willing to spend their precious time in a world where publishing or perishing is so vital for a scientist. First of all, I gratefully acknowledge all the board members for their invaluable efforts in this process. Moreover, I would like to thank all the reviewers, approached because of their specific expertise, for their highly appreciated contributions to this reviewing process. In the course of the eight years of my editorship, the following colleagues resigned from the board for various personal reasons: Dr. D. Fredj-Reygrobellet, Dr. R. van der Gaag, Dr. N. van Haeringen, Dr. B.W. Griffin, Dr. T. Møller-Pedersen, Dr. B. Ehinger and Dr. J. Bours. Two excellent members of the board were lost due to death: Dr. I. Weisse and Dr. K. Green. I want to express my gratitude for their great efforts to make *Ophthalmic Research* what it is today. Scientific managing of a journal implies a lot of careful and efficient administration. I gratefully acknowledge the excellent assistance up till June 2001 of my previous secretary Mrs. Ria Grimbergen-Wiersma in this process.

Finally, I would like to say that it was a great privilege and a pleasure to have been at the service of the worldwide eye and ophthalmic community.

Gijs F.J.M. Vrensen
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