

לְדוֹר וָדוֹר

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Editorial

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On behalf of all the editors on our board, it has been an honor to serve the American Society for Clinical Investigation (ASCI) and scientific community with such an important, and humbling, responsibility. Our board has handled close to 24,000 manuscripts, and I am immensely grateful to all the reviewers who put in countless hours dedicated to making peer review the best it can be.

We endeavored to make the editorial process as fair as possible and to cut down on the pernicious trend of calling for excessive experimentation in revision. We initiated new instructions to reviewers, asking them to limit their critiques to 3 main points and to avoid recommending experiments that would take the work in new and different directions. In addition, careful and thoughtful evaluations by the handling associate editors were aimed at lessening the need for unnecessary work requested from authors. The impact of this policy has been a more binary decision-making process in the first round, driven by the question, Is there a clear path to acceptance? If not, then the board recommends that the paper avoid a prolonged period of repeated external review only to have the paper ultimately not be successful. We also emphasized the importance of providing authors with timely review of their papers, and the editors worked tirelessly to make this process as quick and efficient as possible.

About 5 years ago, we instituted the policy of having authors deposit for our review original uncut immunoblot data

prior to publication. We caught many errors that ranged from innocent mistakes in figure generation to out-and-out data manipulation. A number of investigators have written to tell me how grateful they are that we have this prepublication data review process in place, since it likely prevented a postpublication investigation. You can imagine the enormous effort involved with this level of data interrogation, a process that could not be achieved without the incredible hard work of our *JCI* science editors. I am immensely grateful for their dedication and professionalism.

One of the initiatives we launched was a new category of papers called Clinical Medicine. By expanding the board to include expert clinical trialists, we now are able to report on early-phase human clinical trials. This has brought a new area of research to the *Journal* that had been largely lost as the *JCI* evolved to emphasize more experimental model-based mechanistic investigation. I am very pleased to report that we have published over 65 Clinical Medicine papers that, on average, are highly cited and have reported on exciting new therapeutic strategies in humans. Now, true to the original mission of the *JCI* as envisioned by the founders of the Society, we can say that the *Journal of Clinical Investigation* does indeed publish human clinical research.

Another highlight for me has been our video series entitled Conversations with Giants. With so much that can be learned from our thought-leaders in medical sci-

ence, generating a compendium, in the form of an oral history, of the remarkable life stories of individuals who have transformed science and medicine has been a truly rewarding experience (1).

Perhaps the endeavor I am most proud of is the launch of the second *JCI*-brand journal, *JCI Insight*. By way of background, it was apparent to me when I began as editor that the very high bar for in-depth mechanistic investigation led to a situation where many high-quality papers did not reach the level the editorial board set for the *JCI*. Sadly, we had no other option for authors who wanted their papers published in the *JCI*. The mission of *JCI Insight* is two-fold: 1) to publish high-quality important research that may not have the depth of mechanistic investigation typically required for a *JCI* paper but that describes a new discovery; and 2) to provide a sustainable revenue stream for the ASCI. We launched *JCI Insight* in January 2016, and I am pleased to report that we published 241 papers in 2016 and are on track to publish over 400 papers in 2017. You will notice the high-quality investigations in a broad range of basic and medical disciplines that are now published under the *JCI Insight* moniker. Since we are every bit as committed to data integrity at *JCI Insight* as we are at the *JCI*, we also instituted policies to enhance data transparency by requiring authors to show their raw data accompanied by clear and informative figure legends, allowing readers to easily understand and interpret the author's experiments. I look forward to continuing to bring new ideas to *JCI Insight* as we experiment with innovative ways to improve on the peer-review process and publish high-quality papers.

I frequently heard from ASCI members that they were pleased to be inducted into our prestigious society, but they were not sure how their membership was benefitting them in terms of a hallmark of the Society's activities — publication of the *JCI* — given that anyone can access research free of charge. To address this lament, we initiated the Author Guaranteed Review for ASCI members. Any member in good standing can designate one paper per year to be automatically sent out for peer review. Given

that the editorial board currently only sends out approximately 30% of the submitted papers, this benefit adds real value to being an ASCI member. I am also pleased to report that citation metrics for manuscripts designated for guaranteed review measure are comparable with those of all the other papers submitted by ASCI members.

Since 1924, the *JCI* goes through a volcanic level disruption every 5 years, when the operations nerve center closes down at the old site and a new operations office is launched at the institution of the new editor in chief. Since it is fairly common that the experienced staff editors of the old editorial board do not wish to relocate to a new part of the country, a risk is that all institutional memory of how the *JCI* editorial office operates will evaporate. This was true for my transition, and at that time, I felt strongly that no future editor in chief should endure the difficulties we experienced in the first few months of our tenure. Fortunately, Sarah Jackson, Corinne Williams, and Elyse Dankoski will remain in place and provide full operational support to Dr. Tomaselli

and the Hopkins Editorial Board, allowing them to implement their full editorial vision with speed and precision.

The *JCI* exists within an extremely competitive environment of journal publishing. As a board, we have strived to publish the most rigorous and highest-quality basic science and clinical investigation that was submitted to the *Journal*. I am extremely proud of the dedication my scientific editorial board has brought to the *JCI*, showing remarkable thoughtfulness and professionalism as they adjudicated the merits of their assigned manuscripts on a daily basis. Quality and excellence has been our guiding principle. Our board has not been overly concerned with impact factor and has frequently decided not to publish a flashy paper — that likely would be highly cited — because we felt it lacked sufficient scientific rigor. As a consequence, we have seen our impact factor remain the same or slightly fall over the years — largely driven by the lack of a small number of very highly cited papers (2). While this was a conscious decision that we made, the

next editor in chief and board will need to think about how much attention to give to this highly flawed, but widely sought-after, metric. Fortunately, because we launched *JCI Insight*, the next editor and board will have the freedom to implement their vision without worrying about the financial implications to the Society.

In closing, on behalf of my entire editorial board, we have been honored by the trust you have placed in us, and we wish great success to Dr. Tomaselli and his editorial team at Johns Hopkins as they guide the *JCI* to new and greater heights.

Howard A. Rockman, M.D.

Editor in Chief, JCI and JCI Insight

1. Journal of Clinical Investigation. Conversations with Giants in Medicine. JCI Website. <http://www.jci.org/videos/cgms>. Accessed April 26, 2017.
2. Lariviere V, et al. A simple proposal for the publication of journal citation distributions. Cold Spring Harbor website. <http://biorxiv.org/content/early/2016/07/05/062109>. Updated July 5, 2016. Accessed April 26, 2017.