The Year Ahead

As I begin my third year as Editor-in-Chief, I would like to review how Cancer Research has developed over the past 2 years and outline our goals for the future.

New Graphic Design

This January issue marks the debut of our new cover design. Soon after assuming the Editorship in January 2000, I proposed that the cover of Cancer Research be redesigned to reflect the cutting-edge science being published. I was pleased to learn that the AACR had planned to redesign all of its journal covers for launch in 2002. Throughout the year-long redesign process, I worked with the AACR Publications staff to move the main focus of the covers away from pictures of individuals and toward the high-quality science that characterizes the journal. With the new design which incorporates a side bar, we will now be able to highlight multiple articles from each issue. This design will also allow us to highlight important accomplishments, events and individuals in the research community who have contributed to the success of the Journal and the Association.

Continuing the journal’s redesign, in 2002 we will work to change the look of the entire publication, re-evaluating everything from the typeface to the manuscript layout, section headings, and even the paper on which the journal is printed. Our goal is to enhance the reader’s experience by presenting information in the clearest possible manner.

Cancer Research Online

In January 2001, we announced the launch of Cancer Research Online [www.cancerres.aacrjournals.org], another important step in the evolution of the journal. Hosted by Stanford University’s High Wire Press, Cancer Research Online has made an immediate impact on readers. International readers now have quick access to the most up-to-date research, and all users benefit from the hyperlinks to cited articles and other hypertext features. I am pleased to report that, since the launch of Cancer Research Online on January 22, more than 650,000 uses of full-text articles, as well as more than 620,000 downloads of articles, have been recorded. All individual subscribers to Cancer Research are entitled to access the online version free of charge. If you currently receive the journal in print, we encourage you to activate your online subscription.

Impact Factor/Citations

Citations of Cancer Research articles increased from 89,550 in 1999 to 92,411 in 2000 (ISI, 2000). Cancer Research continues to be the most-cited cancer journal in the world. The journal ranks 14th among all scientific journals in number of citations. Although these data are encouraging, I am disappointed to note that the journal’s impact factor decreased slightly over the same period, from 8.614 in 1999 to 8.460 in 2000. One of my goals for the next several years is to significantly increase the journal’s impact factor commensurate with its status as the premier forum for cancer research.

The impact factor is a ratio of the number of recent journal articles cited over a 2-year period to the number of journal articles published in that period. Thus, my goal over the next several years is not to publish more articles, but to publish only articles that meet higher standards of priority, novelty, and scientific merit, i.e., those of highest impact.

Advances in Brief

The acceptance criteria for Advances in Brief will also be strengthened and the category renamed to emphasize its role as a forum to present the highest priority, cutting-edge research. Limitations on article length and format will be more consistently applied, and Associate Editors will be encouraged to recommend acceptance only for the top 10–15% of articles submitted. I strongly urge authors planning to submit to this category to submit to this category to review the changes in criteria and impact that these manuscripts will be judged by. These will be posted on the AACR publications website early in the new year.

Online Manuscript Submission and Review

As we hold our contributing authors to higher standards for quality, we are also committed to improving their experience with the peer review process by providing a rapid, fair, and thorough evaluation of each manuscript. A Web-based system for submitting and reviewing manuscripts is now considered a crucial component of any peer-review process. After an extensive search, a Web-based submission and review system has been selected and is targeted for launch around the time of the 93rd AACR Annual Meeting in April 2002.

Section Editors

I have been re-evaluating the editorial structure of the journal to determine whether it could be modified to streamline the review process. I feel strongly that implementing a Section Editor system would greatly increase the speed and quality of the review process. We are assessing how many Section Editors would be appropriate for the volume of manuscripts received, and we are currently identifying scientists with the appropriate expertise and commitment to assume this important role for the journal. This new structure, combined with the efficiencies realized by the online review system, will completely transform the peer review process for Cancer Research.

As I look back on the past 2 years as Editor-in-Chief, I would like to express my gratitude to the Associate Editors and reviewers who have so generously volunteered their time and expertise to maintain Cancer Research as the cancer community’s most vital publication. It is clear that 2002 will be an important year for the journal, one that will reflect the exciting advances that have brought us to the threshold of preventing and curing cancer.

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