Editorial

Where do our reviewers come from?

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In this issue we acknowledge the help of over 2,500 reviewers who produced more than 10,000 reports since we took office in June 1995. There is only limited information on the quality of such reports and on the way editors select new reviewers and thereby consolidate and expand the backbone of their journals. Although editors and not reviewers make decisions on the fate of manuscripts, it is obvious that an editor will not easily accept a paper when it has received negative reviewer’s reports. On the other hand positive reports are no guarantee that a paper will be published because page limitations force editors to make priority decisions [1]. The characteristics of good reviewers have been assessed on the basis of information from the Journal of General Internal Medicine [2]. The outcome of this analysis was a little surprising in some aspects. Good reviewers were young, had received research training (J Gen Intern Med is a clinical journal), had an additional degree to a MD and that came from an institute with prestige. It also helped when they were known by the editor and when the authors were blinded to the reviewer. Time spent on the review was another positively correlated factor. The membership of an Editorial Board had no effect and there was a trend to an inverse relation between academic rank and performance. Assistant professors and fellows tended to do better than associate professors, whereas the latter did better than full professors. Surprisingly, the publication record of the reviewer was not significantly correlated with the quality of the produced reports. It has been suggested that young reviewers perform well because they spend a lot of time on a review and that older, more experienced reviewers would be better capable to put the work in perspective [3,4]. The latter was not confirmed by the study of Evans and colleagues [2]: younger reviewers were also better at evaluating the importance of the research question and in helping targeting key questions.

What does this mean? We think it means that young reviewers should be recruited by editors as soon as possible, which means in practice after a first authored

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paper has been accepted. Such a policy will also establish or maintain a geographical distribution of the reviewer’s pool over the whole world in line with the distribution of accepted manuscripts. Although Cardiovascular Research has been an international journal from its very start in 1967 [5], 64% of its reviewers came from either the USA or the UK when we took office in 1995. Our policy of gradual internationalization of the team of reviewers of the journal based on accepted (i.e. not submitted) papers has changed the geographical distribution of available expertise (Fig. 1). New reviewers were still in the far majority recruited making. Cardiovasc Res 1999;43:261±264. Austria (2 to 21), Finland (1 to 10), Hungary (3 to 17), Poland (1 to 6), Russia (0 to 9), Spain (3 to 23) over a relatively short period. In short, Cardiovascular Research has become even more “international”.

References


Presently, the Amsterdam Editors of Cardiovascular Research are 5 years in office. The Journal has become and continues to be a success, with increasing numbers of submissions and a steeply rising impact factor. Without the continuing support of our reviewers this would not have been possible. The Editors gratefully acknowledge the following 2509 reviewers (total number of reviews: 10458) for their support in this five year period. (Number of reviews between brackets):

Aalkjaer, Christian (5) Alexander, Yvonne (2)
Aardal, Sidsel (9) Allaart, Cornelis P. (3)
AarJonson, Philip I. (2) Allard, Michael F. (1)
Abassi, Zaid (10) Allen, David G. (1)
Abd-El-Fattah, Anwer S. (13)
Abdelmeguid, Alaa E. (4) Allin, T.J.A. (1)
Abrahamsson, Tommy (1) Allessie, Mauritius A. (4)
Adams, Michael (1) Aloia, Roland (1)
Adamson, Philip B. (1) Alps, Brian (7)
Adcock, Ian (1) Altschuld, Ruth (2)
Addicks, K. (7) Altura, Burton M. (4)
Adjgey, A.A.J. (2) Ambrosio, Giuseppe (14)
Adler, David (2) Ammar, T. (1)
Afzal, M. Nasir (2) Amodeo, Celso (5)
Agarwal, K. (1) Amrani, Mohamed (7)
Agnelll, Giancarlo (1) Amtorp, Ole (1)
Agnoletti, Gabriella (7) Anand-Srivastava, Madhu B. (2)
Agrotis, Alex (1) Anderson, Karen M (1)
Ahuwalia, Amrita (4) Anderson, Page (4)
Ahnve, Staffan (2) Anderson, Peter G. (8)
Akaiwa, Ryuichi (5) Anderson, Robert H. (1)
Akkerwa, Masood (1) Anderson, Steven (3)
Akita, Hozuka (9) Andrade, Silvia P. (3)
Akkerman, J.W. (1) André-Fouët, Xavier (1)
Alam, Mohammed Shah (4) Andriantisitohaina, Ramaroson (2)
Albino-Teixeira, A. (1) Andries, L.J. (3)

Andriani, Annalisa (4) Angelini, Gianni Di (12)
Angus, James A. (2) Antonios, Tarek F. (2)
Antzelevitch, Charles (3) Anunonwo, Justus (2)
Anversa, P. (6) Anwar, Asif (5)
Anyukovsky, Evgeny P. (1) Appelman, Yolande (1)
Applegate, R.J. (1) Appleyard, R.F. (3)
Aptein, C. (1) Arai, Andrew E. (3)
Archer, Stephen L. (1) Ardell, J.L. (2)
Arita, Makoto (13) Arlock, Per (3)
Armiger, Lois C. (1) Armour, John Andrew (5)
Armstrong, Paul W. (5) Arribas, Silvia M. (5)
Arh, Urs (1) Aronson, R.S. (2)
Arnold, Malcolm O. (1)
Arrowsom, N.T.P. (2)
Artman, Mike (1)

Arts, T. (1) Ashraff, Muhammad (1)
Asimakis, Gregory K. (6)
Atar, Dan (4)
Atkins, Dianne L. (3)
Attubato, Michael (1)
Auchampach, John (11)
Auch-Schwellk, Wolfgang (9)
Au, Robert (2)
Aupeitit, Jean F. (2)
Austin, Clare (1)
Avkiran, Metin (6)
Avario, Albert (3)
Azzawi, May (2)
Baan, Jan (8)
Baars, Anton (10)
Bache, Robert J. (5)
Bachetti, Tiziana (3)
Backx, Peter (1)
Badano, Luigi (3)
Badiomín, Lina (7)
Bailey, Allen J. (1)
Baird, A.J. (2)
Baker, Andrew H. (9)
Baker, John (12)
Baker, Kenneth (1)
Bakker, Erik N.T.P. (2)
Bakker, Stephan J.L. (1)