Entering the 21st Century

It has been one year since I assumed responsibility as Editor-in-Chief for Health Education Research, and it has been a very eventful year. A year ago, our goals were 1) to consolidate the two existing editorial offices into one global office, 2) fully implement an electronic manuscript management system, 3) maintain or increase the journal’s Impact Factor and the number and quality of submissions, and 4) reshape our Editorial Board and Associate Editors to better reflect our global mission. I am pleased to announce that we have made substantial progress on each of these goals, although much work remains to be done.

Thanks to the diligence and acumen of Managing Editor, Meredith Madden Jain, Health Education Research has a consolidated editorial office at Georgia State University, with a single point of entry for manuscripts and a streamlined editorial decision-making process. Now, all manuscripts submitted to the journal are screened by the same set of editorial eyes and distributed to a team of Associate Editors to coordinate the review and decision-making process. Previously manuscripts from the Americas were sent to the editorial office in the US, and manuscripts from the “rest of the world” were submitted to the UK office, with reviewers typically from the respective regions. Now all manuscripts come to one global office and the best reviewers in the world are asked to review, regardless of the nationality of the lead author. I firmly believe that this global approach will result in higher quality of manuscripts being published in Health Education Research and will begin to break down some of the artificial differences of how health education and health promotion are viewed around the world. Our goal is to contribute to the development of quality health education research, based on theory, and which can inform practice globally. We believe that a single, global editorial office will go a long way to achieving this goal.

Our second goal was to fully implement an electronic manuscript management system, and I am pleased to announce that all manuscripts are now submitted electronically to Health Education Research through Scholar One’s Manuscript Central program. While not completely user-friendly, the bugs are slowly being worked out and manuscripts are being reviewed, revised and published in record time. We see this system being further improved and simplified in 2006, as we continually increase the diversity of our reviewers.

Our third goal was to continue to increase Health Education Research’s Impact Factor, as well as the number and quality of submissions. I am pleased to report, that our Impact Factor has increased for the fifth year in a row. Of course, I cannot take credit for the increases, since the most recent one was for calendar year 2004, but rather must acknowledge the vision and leadership of our previous editors, Jim Sorenson and Keith Tones, both of whom are responsible for setting the successful trajectory for the journal, and a trajectory I am committed to maintain. I must also acknowledge Shelley Andrews, Executive Editor of Health Education Research at Oxford University Press, for her commitment to the development and success of the journal. Perhaps due to the increased recognition of the quality of Health Education Research, or perhaps due to the ease of electronic submission, or some combination of the two, the number of submissions has increased substantially, to the point where we are now receiving approximately a manuscript a day, and publishing about one out of five. While the number of submissions has definitely increased, time will only tell whether the quality has increased commensurately. I am confident that it has.

Our last goal, and perhaps our boldest undertaking, was to reshape our Editorial Board and Associate Editors, and to truly create a global journal. As previously mentioned, our Associate Editors and most of our Editorial Board were located in the US, UK or Western Europe. As a first step in “globalizing” Health Education Research, I have revamped the governance structure of the journal to have one Associate Editor in each of...
the six WHO regions. I am pleased to announce our new team of Associate Editors:

**PAHO:** *Amelie Ramirez* is the only previous Associate Editor continuing in that role and is on the faculty at Baylor College of Medicine. Her areas of interest include chronic disease prevention, particularly cancer control research, and minority health issues.

**EURO:** *Peter Aggleton* is on the faculty of the Institute of Education at the University of London and has expertise in sexual health, HIV/AIDS, mental health and adolescent health education.

**AFRO:** *Priscilla Reddy* works with the National Health Promotion Research Development Group in South Africa. Her expertise lies in health promotion as it relates to women’s issues, community based interventions, professional training, school health, ageing, HIV/AIDS, violence prevention and tobacco control.

**EMRO:** *Farag Elkamel* is currently faculty at Cairo University and Dean of Mass Communications at Ahram Canadian University in Cairo, Egypt. With leadership experience at WHO and UNICEF, Farag’s expertise pertains to health communications for international behavior change and social development.

**WPRO:** *Jennifer O’Dea* is on the faculty of the University of Sydney with expertise in nutrition and physical activity, particularly as it applies to the prevention of childhood obesity. Jenny has been working as an Associate Editor for the past few months and is serving as Guest Editor for an upcoming theme issue of *Health Education Research* on childhood obesity.

**SEARO:** *Davidson Munodawafa* is the SEARO Health Promotion Regional Advisor with expertise in school health education and policy, healthy settings and cross-cultural issues.

We have also expanded our Editorial Board to include more board members from around the world. Despite this effort, seventy percent of the Board is still from PAHO or EURO, however this also reflects the proportion of articles from these regions. My goal is that we can gradually increase the proportion of quality articles from other parts of the world and expand our Editorial Board concomitantly. We are pleased to have retained the commitment and enthusiasm of Bill Brieger of The Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health who is dedicated to assisting authors from developing countries prepare high quality, publishable manuscripts.

Lastly, let me say a few words of health education substance, rather than just comment on journal management. The Editorial Board has rightfully acknowledged the value of thematic issues, or issues that at least contained a grouping of manuscripts on a common theme. We have taken the Editorial Board’s suggestions to heart and we have a number of thematic issues in the pipeline, with plans for more in the future. This year we hope to publish a theme issue on tobacco control to coincide with the World Conference on Tobacco or Health in Washington, DC in July (http://www.2006conferences.org/t-index.php), and additional thematic issues on qualitative research, with Sylvia Tillford as Guest Editor, and childhood obesity, with Jenny O’Dea as Guest Editor. In addition to the thematic issues, we are also working on a special supplement (an extra issue in addition to the six regularly scheduled issues) on Item Response Theory, funded by the U.S. National Cancer Institute, with Louise Masse as Guest Editor. Suggestions for future thematic issues can be sent to me at her@gsu.edu.

*Michael Eriksen*

*Editor-in-Chief*