

Hello

The first issue of Volume 17 marks the change in editorial leadership of JSR. From this issue onwards, it will be my honour and privilege to be Editor-in-Chief of JSR together with a new team of associate editors. I am replacing Jim Horne, the founding editor of JSR who served as Chief Editor for 16 years. Together with a talented and devoted team of associate editors and a cadre of excellent scientists who helped with the peer review process, he built an excellent journal. The journal's standing for 2007 is one of the top 10 behavioural science journals and one of the top 25 physiology journals. We should applaud and thank Jim and his team for their impressive achievements.

Sixteen years ago, when JSR made its first steps, we eagerly awaited the printed copy of the journal that arrived in the mail to read about what is new in sleep. There was no impact factor and no citation index, and sleep scientists had two choices where to publish their papers, either in *Sleep* or in the *Journal of Sleep Research*. Today, papers are available for readers weeks after acceptance, journals are ranked annually and evaluated using unique metrics based on bibliometric analysis, and there are no less than six journals dedicated exclusively to sleep and sleep disorders, all competing for sleep scientists' and sleep clinicians' attention. In 2007, the five sleep journals listed on the Web of Knowledge published 354 papers, but the term 'sleep' appeared in the title of more than 1200(!) additional papers published in a variety of other journals. This voluminous number of publications is a clear testimony to the unprecedented growth of our field, which has become truly multidisciplinary. To accommodate the growing scope of sleep research, I have increased the number of associate editors to 16 to allow a better representation of the broad spectrum of sleep research.

No editor writing his 'Hello' editorial can avoid the issue of his journal impact factor. Justified or not, the impact factor has become the most widely used metric for assessing the overall quality of a journal. Authors submit their best papers to journals with the highest impact factor that they think might accept them, and high-quality papers in turn lead to a further increase in impact factor resulting in positive feedback loop.

Impact factors of journals are taken into consideration in academic promotion procedures, in grant applications and even in evaluating institutes of higher learning. The impact factor of a journal is dependent, first and foremost, on the quality of its papers, but not only on that. It is also affected by a variety of factors, such as the subject specialty and its size, type of papers, reviews or original contributions, the inclusion of consensus reports and professional societies' guidelines and sometimes even on the aggressive policy of editors to encourage citations of their journals. Obviously, these factors are not necessarily related to quality. The 2007 impact factor of JSR – 3.45 – ranks it among the top 10 behavioural science journals, which is an incredible achievement. To further improve the JSR impact factor, the journal should become the first choice for submission of the best papers by sleep researchers worldwide. Starting from this issue, this will be my goal. You will notice changes in this issue in the journal's appearance and in the guidelines to authors aimed at improving the journal and making it more attractive to readers and submitters alike. Moreover, to shorten the lag time between a paper's acceptance and publication, JSR will offer *online early publications*. These early publications will be complete full-text articles that will be available as soon as they are ready, rather than having to wait for the next scheduled print issue. Every effort will be made to ensure that the lag time between acceptance and online early publication will be less than 8 weeks.

With the help of the associate editors, I plan to continue and expand on the fine work of our predecessors and strengthen the leading position of JSR in our field. The journal will continue to emphasize basic research and exercise a rigorous reviewing process. I encourage sleep researchers wherever they are to submit their best papers to JSR.

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