



editorials

Haematologica 1998; 83:1-2

Haematologica 1998

This year Haematologica is facing several challenges, the most important being: 1) a process of increasing internationalization; and 2) the consolidation of the joint-venture with the *Spanish Society of Hematology* (*Asociación Española de Hematología y Hemoterapia*). These challenges are mutually related and deserve some commentary. I am very pleased to have the opportunity to make the following observations.

Haematologica was founded in 1920 by the distinguished haematologist Adolfo Ferrata, and for a long period of time the journal was exclusively in Italian and intended chiefly for Italian-speaking specialists. During the last decade, the Editors of the journal began the process of internationalization by the progressive introduction of the English language. The completion of this process has been associated with the increasing recognition of Haematologica in the international forum and reflected in the corresponding impact factor. The increasing importance of Haematologica has prompted the present directors to convert it from the 6 yearly issues into a monthly journal, as well as to start several actions in order to achieve the penetration of Haematologica into all western countries, most of which are represented on the Editorial Board.

An additional and very important challenge for Haematologica is the consolidation of the joint-venture with the *Spanish Society of Hematology*. During the last quarter of the present century, the English language has gained a privileged place as the principal means of scientific communication. Some nations have experienced this phenomenon as an invasion of their own language and there have to be resisted. When considering the importance of a language, two functions should be separated: 1) language as a simple tool of communication; 2) language as a bearer of cultural and national identity. Nowadays, it is inevitable to accept the English language as a kind of Esperanto for international communication; nevertheless, every nation should fiercely defend its language as an expression of cultural and national identity for the sake of its own survival.

Like many other scientific corporations, the *Spanish Society of Hematology* recently decided to have an official organ to be published in English. Instead of starting just another journal, the possibility of

joining efforts with Haematologica was conceived. Multilateral negotiations lasting several months ended in success. In addition to being the official organ of the *Italian Society of Hematology* and the *Italian Society of Experimental Hematology*, the journal is now also the official organ of the *Spanish Society of Hematology*. I am very honoured to have been appointed by our society as the Co-Editor of Haematologica. In my opinion, this joint-venture is like a clinical trial whose final outcome is unknown. If we, the members of the *Spanish Society of Hematology*, are merely content to have a journal in English, the trial will fail; whereas if we increase the amount and the quality of our research and use this journal for our expression, then the outcome of the joint-venture will be successful.

I have the feeling that the prospects of Haematologica are bright. By effectively coping with the above-mentioned challenges, the journal will further increase its impact factor and become one of the best hematological publications in Europe.

Ciril Rozman
Haematologica Co-Editor,
representing the Spanish Association of Hematology
and Hemotherapy

Haematologica 1998: new policies and formats in the readers' interest

The reader will note both formal and substantial changes in this first issue of 1998. Most of the new features have been discussed in the recent Meeting on *Peer Review in Scientific Journals and Global Communication*, Prague, September 18-21, 1997. After an extensive inhouse examination, we have decided to adopt them with the aim of providing our readers with as much information as possible about the papers we publish.

Contributions and Acknowledgments. Haematologica now requires that all authors disclose to the reader their specific contributions to the paper.¹ The Vancouver definition of authorship² emphasizes the idea of responsibility: authorship credit should be based only on substantial contributions to:

- (a) conception and design, or analysis and interpretation of data;
- (b) drafting the article or revising it critically for

important intellectual content;

(c) final approval of the version to be published.

Conditions (a), (b), and (c) must all be met. The Lancet has introduced a description of contributions in 1997.³ In addition to describing their specific contributions, the authors submitting papers to Haematologica are requested to specify the criteria for the order in which their names appear.

Conflict of interest. For the last few years authors have been required to disclose any conflict of interest or state that there is no conflict to disclose. Our request sounds: "Please provide any pertinent information about the authors' personal or professional situation that might affect or appear to affect their views on the subject (financial support by companies interested in the subject matter under discussion, or special financial interests – stock ownership or consulting fees – on the part of the authors)." The authors' statement will be now published under the chapter *Disclosures*.

Redundant publications. The Vancouver Group defines redundant publication as "publication of a paper that overlaps substantially with one already published".² Having this in mind, the authors are asked to disclose whether there is any overlap (no, < 50%, ≥ 50%) with previous papers. If there is any overlapping they must send us a copy the overlapped article(s) and explain why Haematologica should publish the paper under examination. We also indicate that tentative reasons may include different patrons or the fact that previous paper(s) appeared in a non-peer reviewed symposium supplement.

Quite possibly, these requirements will raise strong criticisms: our objective is not to have peace of mind, but rather to have a better journal.

Mario Cazzola
Executive Editor

References

1. Rennie D, Yank V, Emanuel L. When authorship fails. A proposal to make contributors accountable. *JAMA* 1997; 278:579-85.
2. International Committee of Medical Journal Editors. Uniform requirements for manuscripts submitted to biomedical journals. *JAMA* 1997; 277:927-34. [A small group of editors of general medical journals met informally in Vancouver, British Columbia, in 1978 to establish guidelines for the format of manuscripts submitted to their journals. The group became known as the Vancouver Group. Its requirements for manuscripts, including formats for bibliographic references developed by the *US National Library of Medicine* (NLM), were first published in 1979. The Vancouver Group expanded and evolved into the *International Committee of Medical Journal Editors* (ICMJE), which meets annually; gradually it has broadened its concerns. The Committee has produced 5 editions of the *Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals*. Over the years, issues have arisen that go beyond manuscript preparation. Some of these issues are now covered in the Uniform Requirements; others are addressed in separate statements. Each statement has been published in a scientific journal. The fifth edition (1997) is an effort to reorganize and reword the fourth edition to increase clarity and address concerns about rights, privacy, descriptions of methods, and other matters. The total content of the Uniform Requirements may be reproduced for educational, not-for-profit purposes without regard for copyright; ICMJE encourages distribution of the material. Journals that agree to use the Uniform Requirements (over 500 do so) are asked to cite the 1997 document in their instructions to authors].
3. Horton R. The signature of responsibility. *Lancet* 1997; 350:5-6.