

## Editorial

### Changes at Our Journal

Philip J. Rosenthal\*

*University of California, San Francisco, San Francisco, California*

I am honored and thrilled to serve as the new Editor-in-Chief of the *American Journal of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene* (AJTMH). I am also humbled because this will be a challenging task, and Jim Kazura left big shoes to fill. Jim's skillful leadership of the Journal for the last 15 years has been an enormous service to the membership of the American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene (ASTMH) and the larger scientific community. Memories are fading, but many of us will remember some difficult days for the journal at about the turn of the century. Jim turned things around quickly after he took the helm, and under his tenure the Journal has been a leading voice in tropical medicine research. Indeed, most will agree that the AJTMH is the leading journal in the world addressing the full range of topics in tropical medicine.

In addition to Jim Kazura, many others deserve praise for the recent success of the AJTMH. First, Joe Vinetz has been Jim's indefatigable second-in-command as Associate Editor since 2000. Joe also filled in as acting Editor-in-Chief while Jim served as president of the ASTMH in 2011–2012. Joe's breadth of knowledge and enthusiasm are impressive, and his service to the Journal has been great, including ushering in important advances in scientific communication. Section Editors play vital roles in managing reviews of dozens of manuscripts each year. I will be leaning heavily on them in the coming years. Lastly, as Managing Editor since 2000, Cathi Siegel has played a vital role in skillfully shepherding the production of each issue of the Journal. Working with an outstanding staff, Cathi ensures efficient review and dissemination of research findings. Cathi, Jim, and Joe have each been generous in providing assistance during my transition to Editor-in-Chief.

Our journal has challenges. First, tropical medicine research is always on the fringe when it comes to general interest and to funding, and so most contributors to the Journal are increasingly concerned about our challenging climate for research. Second, there is growing competition among journals for the best research reports. This competition has been increased by the coming of open access journals. These journals offer a great opportunity for dissemination of research results, but they are expensive for contributors, and they are subject to abuse because profits gleaned from publication might encourage inappropriate acceptance of research reports. The AJTMH is not pushed to publish for profit, but

it cannot yet offer open access for all publications without considerable extra expense for authors and for the Society. In the coming years, a new model, allowing broad access, control of expenses, and the maintenance of rigorous standards of quality, will likely emerge. Third, the medical literature is challenged by the vast quantities of unfiltered information that are available in the internet age. We increasingly rely on searches using the most convenient program to quickly gather needed facts, whether the best flight schedule or the life cycle of a helminth of interest. This ready access to information is one of the hallmarks of our age, and it is a huge boon to scientific communication and advancement, but it also comes with risk. How, among all the information flowing, can rigorously reviewed and high-quality research results continue to be noticed?

Our journal also has great opportunities. Although funding for tropical medicine research remains challenging, the world has clearly embraced the concept that we all need to be concerned about tropical medicine. Tropical medicine is often equated with diseases of the most impoverished, but it is now appreciated that from practical and humanistic perspectives, the wealthier nations must contribute to the control of diseases of the developing world. Thus, funding for tropical medicine research and the control of tropical diseases has increased markedly in the past decade, heralding an age in which we can expect continuous advances in our understanding of tropical diseases and our ability to control them. The AJTMH is poised to play a major part in facilitating the communication of advances in this area. A clear opportunity for the AJTMH is to broaden its scope, for example with increased emphasis on general issues of global health, perhaps better validating the last word in the title of our journal and our society. In addition, increased attention seems warranted for some important global pathogens, including human immunodeficiency virus and mycobacteria.

Finally, what do I hope for in my term as Editor-in-Chief? First, and most important, I will strive to maintain the high quality of the journal. In this regard, I am thrilled that Joe Vinetz will remain the Associate Editor and that Jim Kazura will serve as a Section Editor; these two friends will greatly simplify my transition but also allow the continuity essential to maintaining a great journal. Second, I hope that, without sacrificing quality, we can expand our scope into areas that are fully within its domain, but have been underrepresented. Third, I hope to expand the roles of perspectives and review papers to educate readers on the latest advances in tropical medicine. Interested contributors are encouraged to discuss potential submissions with me.

In summary, I am excited about the opportunity to lead the AJTMH and look forward to working with

---

\*Address correspondence to Philip J. Rosenthal, Department of Medicine, University of California, San Francisco, Box 0811, San Francisco, CA 94143. E-mail: prosenthal@medsfgh.ucsf.edu

the membership of the ASTMH and all those interested in tropical medicine to produce a journal that remains vital to scientific advances in our field. Please join me in working to make our journal the best that it can be.

Received November 21, 2013. Accepted for publication November 21, 2013.

Author's address: Philip J. Rosenthal, Department of Medicine, University of California, San Francisco, Box 0811, San Francisco, CA 94143, E-mail: [prosenthal@medsfgh.ucsf.edu](mailto:prosenthal@medsfgh.ucsf.edu).