

A new year, new challenges, a renewed journal?

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The European Journal of Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases is a healthy journal, with over 600 submitted manuscripts annually. Most of these papers are in the clinical microbiology sector (59%), with manuscripts on virology (15%) and fungal infections (10%) ranking second and third. However, over 50% of this impressive input has to be rejected immediately and, among the manuscripts that are sent out for peer review, another 30–40% will, in the end, not be acceptable for publication. Primarily, this is related to the relative quality of the various submissions: some are simply better than others and our review process is aimed at selecting these top papers. On the other hand, we are faced with a continuously increasing number of submissions, an increase that is significantly larger than what we will ever be able to publish in the end. As a result, we are now facing a backlog with respect to ‘paper publication,’ although our electronic publishing system is as timely as it could ever be: within three weeks of acceptance of your manuscripts, these will be listed in PubMed and will also be directly downloadable from that resource. We explain the backlog as being the visible result of the increasing quality of the submitted manuscripts. In order to accommodate for this higher level of page consumption, Springer, our publisher, will allow a 5% increase of our page budget for 2009.

Still, and because of the backlog that we are now facing, we will have to change our submission policy. In the coming year, the authors’ instructions will be changed to

explain these changes in more detail. Most visibly, we will change the manuscript categories. The Letters to the Editor section will disappear, as will the Concise Article category, leaving us with Reviews, Regular Articles and Brief Reports. For the latter categories, we will introduce word count caps of around 2,500 and 750, respectively. However, Springer will facilitate the publication of Supplementary Material through their Web-based system. Simultaneously, we will try to acquire more reviews, which will be facilitated by the appointment of a review editor early this year. Finally, we will establish an advisory board, the members of which will be asked to continuously review the quality of the journal, with a clear focus on improving the journal further. We hope that this set of measures will guarantee further improvement of the journal and that you, as readers and authors, will remain as dedicated to the journal as you have been over the past years.

I wish to thank all of the authors for their willingness to share their data with us, my gratitude goes to the hundreds of reviewers that help us assess the quality of the manuscripts that are submitted, and you as readers for your continued support of the journal. Last but not least, Nele Jung, who runs the Editorial Office, needs to be acknowledged for performed a smooth job in channelling all of the manuscripts that are submitted.

This leaves me with nothing else than to wish you a prosperous and scientifically successful 2009. I do hope that you will be considering the European Journal of Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases as a worthy forum for the publication of your best work.

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