

Goodbye from Milan!

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As the 5-year term of the editorial team in Milan draws to an end, I would like to take the opportunity to briefly illustrate what we perceive as being the achievements of our tenure together with some of the inevitable unmet goals, and above all to acknowledge the merits of all the persons who successfully contributed to keeping and eventually raising the standard of the Journal.

As anticipated in our inaugural editorial back in 2005, one of our objectives was to increase the visibility of this Journal in the USA and Asia, with the intent of capturing the attention of the many hepatologists who live and practise there and provide them with a potential editorial forum for their research. The rationale behind this is obvious, since these countries lead the way in many fields of hepatology and have substantially contributed to expanding the frontiers of knowledge in science and are deeply involved in cutting-edge research programs in Medicine in competition with Europe. Our strategy of involving as many opinion leaders as possible from those areas of the world to write editorials and review papers has been rewarded as shown by the growing numbers of submissions of original manuscripts from the USA and Asia. In fact, the number of submissions from the USA rose from 106 in 2005 to 233 in 2008, which is an increment of 120%. Submissions from Japan and China increased from 261 in 2005 to 546 in 2008, an increment of 109%. Meanwhile, an increment of 29% was registered in Europe in this period with Italy, Spain, Germany France and UK being the leading contributors.

Having increased the rates of submissions of original papers comprising both clinical and basic research, our

commitment of maintaining a balance between these two research areas was respected and we are proud to say that basic papers have contributed to the current robust impact factor as much as clinically oriented papers have.

The third goal of our editorial team, i.e. to increase the appeal of the Journal to the colleagues involved in liver transplantation was partially achieved through the excellent work of an extremely dedicated AE who has created a platform for the new Editors to further expand on this editorial objective. According to our analysis, the Forum on Liver Transplantation has significantly contributed along with viral hepatitis, liver cancer and genetic and metabolic liver disease to the growth in impact factor reached by the Journal during our tenure.

A special mention is dedicated to all the persons who were involved in the editorial process of the Journal, starting from the loyal Reviewers and our first-class Associate Editors, in-house Assistant Editors and Special section Editors, right up to the Co-Editors, Roberto de Franchis and Mario Mondelli who despite their busy daily schedules were able to competently handle the significant workload generated by the day to day issues in the running of the Journal and above all had very steady hands in overseeing the scientific process of the editorial activity.

Let me also acknowledge the special merits of our office manager, Ms. Ann Fox and her editorial assistant Ms. Lara Firmo for their passionate and intelligent interaction with all those contributing to the editorial activity of the Journal and members of the editorial team.

I would like to thank the past and present Governing Boards of EASL, and in particular the General Secretaries, Jean-Michel Pawlotsky and Heiner Wedemeyer,

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for the attention that they have constantly paid to the Journal in days when the competition in the editorial arena has become tougher. In our view the recent establishment of a permanent editorial office is certainly a step in the right direction to strengthen the Journal. We particularly welcomed the launch of the publication of EASL Clinical Practice Guidelines which we feel will have mutual benefits for the Journal and the Association and indeed for hepatology in general.

I would like to acknowledge the support we received from Profs. Jordi Bruix and Massimo Levrero, Scientific

and Administrative Secretaries of EASL in 2004, who endorsed and had faith in our vision for our editorship and for all their assistance with the initial set-up of the Journal in Milan.

A closing word goes to wish every success to the new team of Editors led by Didier Samuel, together with Chris Day and Peter Galle and the members of the editorial office in their new challenge with the Journal of Hepatology.

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