

## *From the Editor-in-Chief*

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IT CONTINUES TO AMAZE ME THAT THE MAJORITY OF manuscripts submitted to the *Journal*, and more and more manuscripts are now being submitted, fail to conform to our “Instructions to authors”. I had thought that part of the training of researchers in this day and age included seminars on how to write scientific papers. The first rule in such a process is surely to read the “Instructions” provided by the *Journal* to which the researcher intends to submit the article in question. A manuscript, of course, is not disqualified from subsequent publication if it is not prepared according to “Instructions”. I am sure that most Editors, like myself, try not to be biased against manuscripts simply because they are not prepared according to the rules. It is certainly a positive feature, nonetheless, if the manuscript, when received, is in keeping with the recommendations. I recognise that our own “Instructions” are somewhat idiosyncratic, since we do not permit any abbreviations or symbols. This requirement was discussed in our last issue.<sup>1</sup> We indicated in that message that, subsequent to protestations from Gil Wernovsky, we were prepared to weaken our stance with regard to symbols and some abbreviations. The problem with weakening this position, however, is that if we give an inch, many authors will look to take a mile. I should emphasise, therefore, that we retain our belief that the pages of our *Journal* will continue to be much more readable if we retain our ban on abbreviations other than those that can be considered “every day items”, such as “mmHg”, “ml” and “kg”. Similarly, although we will now permit symbols such as “%”, and “/”, I will continue to edit out “<”, and “>”, replacing them with the equivalents in prose. It would help if our authors also avoided the symbols, therefore, when preparing their manuscripts for submission. I should also emphasise that it remains our opinion that articles are much easier to understand when our authors are not offered the option of nominating groups or categories in alpha-numeric fashion. We hope that our authors will take note of these rules, and in future submit their manuscripts properly prepared according to our “Instructions to authors”. We will continue to return those manuscripts not thus prepared to the authors, so that they are in the desired format before being sent out for peer review.

It is also the case that, despite our strict rules for preparation of manuscripts, and our policy of

returning manuscripts not properly prepared, there is no shortage of works submitted for potential publication. Nor do our authors complain directly to us when those works not properly prepared are returned for the required emendations. This is good news, and also bad news. The good news is that, because the number of high quality manuscripts submitted continues to rise, the quality of the work published, in our opinion, continues to improve. The bad news is that, unless we begin to reject a higher proportion of manuscripts than in previous years, we will build up a back-log of work awaiting publication. In fact, as we also indicated in our last report, this has already begun. Even now, we are having to reject many brief reports simply on the basis of priority, giving precedence to original studies. And whilst, in the past, we have usually tried to offer the option to revise original studies if our referees considered them to have potential, we can no longer indulge in this option without increasing the time lag between acceptance and publication. This in itself is not necessarily a bad thing, since it should mean that the quality of those works that are published will continue to improve, and with that, our impact factor should rise, making the *Journal* even more attractive to our potential authors. We recognise, nonetheless, that authors become frustrated when their submissions are rejected simply on the basis of priority. Our other option, therefore, is to seek to increase the number of pages available each year to publish the articles submitted. This, however, is a commercial rather than an academic decision, and depends on the support of our publishers. We are exploring the possibility of increasing either the size of the existing fascicles, or the number of fascicles published each year, and we will keep you informed of progress in this respect. In the meantime, we hope that authors will be patient as we seek to maintain our schedule of publication. It has always been our ambition to publish in timely fashion, and we hope soon to return to our old practices.

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*Editor-in-Chief*

### Reference

1. Anderson RH, Henry GW. From the Editors. *Cardiol Young* 2006; 16: 415–416.