

Midterm Grades

Richard N. Bergman, PhD* and Marilyn Ader, PhD**

doi:10.1038/oby.2008.319

It is July, and despite the heat we should be thinking about the progress of this journal since we took over as Editors. Overall we can say unequivocally that it has been an exciting and rewarding experience for us. We repeat that we have been able to build on the outstanding work that Barbara Corkey and her colleagues did before us. It is clear from simple observation that the journal has a fresh and “hip” look, due mostly to the folks at Nature Publishing Group who have contributed greatly, and helped us get things together, under the leadership of Liz Durzy, and her colleague Caitlin Steir. The new look has provided us opportunities and responsibilities that we did not foresee. One great challenge is to come up with a pleasing and informational cover image every month! We observed that many scientific journals are covered with microscopy images; although those may be interesting, we have tried to be a little more varied. We have included images of systemic biology relationships, functional MRI images, and the beautiful and classical images, including pictures of terracotta soldiers, renaissance operating rooms, and the beautiful drawings of bariatric procedures kindly donated by Dr Eagon on this month's cover. We are haunted by the thought that readers order articles electronically and do not see our covers—please look at them on the web, even if the journal does not come in contact with your desk or coffee table. But we are constantly on the prowl for new and interesting (but appropriate) images, so *please send them in to us!*

We have been given the unique opportunity of identifying specific articles for citation on the journal cover, or on the contents page or “In This Issue” section. We are choosing articles which may seem “newsworthy,”—but we are painfully aware that much of the best science does not fall into that category, as the *hoi polloi* may not be interested in the exquisite details of a scientific study well performed. But the world has changed, and we have changed—a *little bit*—with it.

Speaking (writing) of best science, we are very encouraged by the rate at which articles are being submitted to the journal *Obesity*, and the increasing quality of those submitted. We took on this responsibility for good reason—we were sure that there was a need (“a market”) for a journal focused on obesity, and an exponentially increasing number of first-rate investigators of all types who needed a new venue to present their work. We are now receiving approximately 95 articles per month—approximately 1,200 per year. We can publish about 35 per month, which calculates to an ~35% acceptance rate. We realize that it is increasingly tough to get an article into this journal, but we are trying our best to be fair, and to encourage excellent reviews and innovation. We all know that it was very difficult to get our best work into print, and we hope that especially authors with new and exciting ideas and findings will find a home in *Obesity*. No one of my (R.N.B.) generation can forget Roz Yalow's oft-repeated description of the rejection of the first radioimmunoassay paper in—oops, I guess we will not name the journal! We are greatly encouraged by the well-known investigators who are now choosing *Obesity* as one of their first-line journals. But we recognize that much of the best new material will come from new investigators, and we demand fairness from our Associate Editors, Editorial Board, and referees. We are getting it!

Speaking of the Associate Editors and Editorial Board, we are sure that our early successes are related to their outstanding scientific stature, which guarantees correct scientific judgments. We continue to be shocked and pleased by the amount of “brain time” that highly venerated scientists and referees are willing to put into the reviewing process. We believe that we made very fortunate choices for the board, and we thank them for their hard work and judicious efforts. The amount of time and energy scientists will put in to maintain the standards of the scientific enterprise continues

*Editor-in-Chief; **Deputy Editor. Correspondence: Richard N. Bergman (obesityjournal@earthlink.net)

to amaze, and the journal *Obesity*, updated at such a difficult time in research, is a testament to how strong the system of investigators is, despite the rumbling under our feet regarding scientific funding. We thank our colleagues with all our heart(s). We also must mention Hedy Ross and Hannah Freed, who have gone way beyond expectations to make the journal what it is today.

But we have a long way to go. We have shortened the review time to an average of approximately 1.5 months—but some articles are still in review for too long a period. We inherited a backlog of manuscripts from the previous period, but due to the outstanding support of The Obesity

Society, we have been able to put most of those to bed by this juncture. We are still attempting to upgrade our receipt of more basic papers in the area of neuroscience, and we are optimistic that we will receive more from that very exciting and active area.

So, midterm grade? Maybe a B or B+ (grade inflation, you know). But not yet an A. We are trying, and with your help and cooperation, we will make *Obesity* the preeminent journal in the field. There is no doubt that the need exists, the will exists, and the expertise exists. It is just a matter of time and cooperation from our friends and colleagues *such as you!*