

EDITORIAL

International Journal of Obesity acceptance criteria

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The *International Journal of Obesity* (*IJO*) has achieved a continually rising impact factor, with a value of 4.482 for 2005, and this has contributed to a major increase in the number of manuscripts submitted for publication over the past few years. In 2005 alone, there were over 30% more manuscripts submitted than in 2004, and the submission rate so far in 2006 suggests that there will be another 30% plus increase this year. This clearly reflects the increased awareness of the public health problems that obesity represents, and also the increased investment in obesity-related research throughout the world. At the same time, the number of manuscripts that can be published in *IJO* has not been, nor will be able to be, increased proportionately. The goal of *IJO* is to be the premier journal in the field of nutrition- and obesity-related research, and in order to achieve this, the Editorial Board wishes to ensure that the papers published in the journal are the most novel and of the highest quality. In order to ensure that this aim is met, and that the markedly increased number of submissions can be dealt with as speedily as possible, the Editors have developed the following criteria that will be applied to prioritize newly submitted manuscripts. The consequence of this prioritization system will be that some manuscripts will be rejected soon after submission because it will be clear that they are unlikely to be rated sufficiently highly to warrant publication.

The types of manuscript that would normally be given a low priority for publication include those that:

- (1) Are simple prevalence studies involving a single country at a single time point.
- (2) Involve comorbidities of obesity (e.g. diabetes, cardiovascular disease), without having obesity-specific components to them. Recent examples of this have been manuscripts that look at associations between inflammatory markers and diabetes or cardiovascular disease. This information is clearly of medical relevance, but it is not necessarily a high priority for a journal devoted to obesity research.
- (3) Report the absence of links between obesity and a specific genotype or polymorphism; it is possible that such work could be considered in the form of a letter, but a full manuscript is not justified.
- (4) Describe anthropometric indices of obesity that might correlate with plasma markers of comorbidities, but do not include any data relating to outcome of the comorbidities.

- (5) Are retrospective studies, secondary analyses of data that arise from studies that were not primarily concerned with obesity or body weight, or clinical 'audits' (e.g. of surgical interventions) that were not designed as appropriately controlled clinical research interventions, unless there is particularly novel information presented that is of importance to the medical literature.
- (6) Claim to be pediatric articles but which do not deal specifically with children and adolescents up to the age of 18 years.

If authors wish to submit articles to *IJO* in the above areas, they would need to state clearly in the covering letter and introduction to the manuscript what is novel and informative about the study, and why it is a valuable addition to the scientific literature.

IJO continues to encourage the submission of original articles concerning molecular, cellular, animal and human experimental and clinical studies that address issues related to the development and treatment of obesity, and the functional impairments associated with the obese state. The problems of obesity are multifactorial, and *IJO* will expect to publish articles with biological, psychological, clinical, epidemiological, sociological and environmental approaches to these problems. Reviews in these areas are also encouraged, but prospective authors of such reviews should contact Richard Atkinson to confirm that the topic is of interest and not already covered by a review in preparation.

In order to acknowledge the high standard of articles currently being published in the journal, two prizes will be launched in September this year – *IJO*'s Basic Research Prize and Clinical Research Prize. These new prizes will complement *IJO*'s Pediatric Obesity Prize, which was launched in 2005 in recognition of the quality of articles being published in the quarterly Pediatric Highlights issues of *IJO*. Each Pediatric Highlights issue contains a topical review of relevance to the field of pediatric obesity research, accompanied by 6–8 original research articles, and *IJO*'s Pediatric Associate Editors continue to welcome submissions in this important area, subject to adherence to the above criteria.

To ensure clarity for authors as to *IJO*'s acceptance criteria, the above guidelines will be included in *IJO*'s Instructions to Authors. Please visit <http://mts-ijo.nature.com> for further information and to submit your article online.

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