Editorial

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We mark the completion of 2004, the first full publication year for this editorial team, with a strong sense that *Laboratory Investigation* is moving forward successfully. This journal is devoted to high-quality original research that advances the understanding of human disease, based on both human and experimental studies. Particular emphasis is given to original research exploring the mechanisms of disease, including insights gained into the structural and molecular pathogenesis of disease, and the biological basis for morphologic manifestations of disease. Opportunity is also given to major articles presenting technical advances in the investigation or diagnosis of disease.

Of the 155 peer-review papers published in 2004 (volume 84), approximately 10% each addressed diseases of the nervous system, cardiovascular system, gastrointestinal tract, and liver. In the 4 to 7% range were diseases of the hematopoietic system, bone and soft tissue, head and neck, kidney, breast, lung, and urogenital tract. Endocrine, skin, and infectious diseases made up the remainder. Full-length reports describing advances in the molecular diagnosis of human disease constituted 7% of the articles. This broad distribution reflects the diversity of human disease and its pathologic manifestations. Priority is given to high-quality articles specific to their disease/organ discipline and those which report scientific findings of more general interest to our diverse readership. We hold to the hope that monthly perusal of the journal will enable our readers to stay abreast of the breadth of scientific advances in the pathogenesis of human disease—certainly one of the requisites of being a top-quality pathologist. I can speak for the entire editorial group in stating that service as Editors constitutes one of the best educational experiences we have ever had in this marvelous discipline!

In selecting papers for publication, we have highlighted articles of clear general interest to our readership in the monthly feature entitled, 'Inside Lab Invest'. This article gives background and comment on three to five articles per issue and can also be found online: www.laboratoryinvestigation.org. Another monthly column, 'Pathology Elsewhere', reports on recent key publications and that relevance to articles published in the same issue. Judging from the 'web hits' on these articles, these two features are widely read; time will tell whether our highlighted selections garner similar attention in the cited literature. Four 'Minireviews' were published in 2004, and we hope to increase the regularity of these reviews in the coming year.

There is every indication that *Laboratory Investigation* is garnering attention from a growing base of scientists worldwide. Under this editorial team (July 2003 to present), submissions have increased 50% when compared to 2002–2003. The quality of submissions is superb. Submitted manuscripts are subjected to rigorous editorial evaluation to determine appropriateness for the journal and to assign an initial scientific priority, drawing upon the diverse scientific expertise of our senior editorial team, with consultation from Editorial Board members as needed. Approximately 45% of manuscripts pass this initial review and undergo external peer-review evaluation. The turnaround time for initial editorial review averages 5 days. For external review, a decision is usually rendered within 30 days, with 'in-house' editorial processing time representing 5 to 7 of those days. Our overall 'turnaround time' for reaching an initial decision on submitted papers averages 16 calendar days. For a manuscript that is rejected with opportunity to resubmit, there is a 94% likelihood that the manuscript will ultimately be published in the journal; decision time on the resubmitted paper is usually less than 5 days. Finally, accepted articles are published online usually within 5 weeks, and hardcopy within 16 weeks. Thus, a successful article can go through the review/revision process and move to publication with a minimum of delay—67 days on average (including the authors' revision time) from initial submission to date of online publication, and 112 days until hardcopy publication. We consider this level of performance an absolute requisite for serving authors who submit their manuscripts to the journal. We thank more than 380 outstanding external referees who have provided comprehensive reviews of manuscripts (listed below).

The journal has benefited immensely by becoming a member of the Nature Publishing Group family—a relationship that began with our January 2004 issue. The electronic journal platform supports the rapid review process described above. The journal 'look' has been well received, from cover art to format of the published articles. The journal web site is part of the Nature web site family of journals, one of the most prominent publishing houses in the scientific and medical literature. The monthly visitor count to the journal home page has increased eight-fold when compared to the fall of 2003, and the number of registrants receiving electronic notification of the journal's Table of Contents has increased 18-fold. For nonsubscribers visiting the journal web page,

highlighted articles (as denoted by 'Inside Lab Invest') can be downloaded for free from the journal web site. Perhaps most importantly, the Nature Publishing Group provides outstanding support to the Editorial team, thus helping to ensure that the highest quality product is presented to our readers.

In closing, we feel that *Laboratory Investigation* holds a solid position in the ranks of pathology and research/experimental medicine journals, with every opportunity to gain a pre-eminent position moving forward. Over the past year, we have had the privilege of publishing first-rate experimental

research, bona fide 'bench-to-bedside' research articles, and some stunning 'bedside-to-bench-to-bedside' advances in the diagnosis of human disease. Human and experimental disease is awe-inspiring in both its molecular and morphologic manifestations. Our goal is to reveal the scientific reasons for these manifestations, and to support advances in the diagnosis and understanding of patients with these disease processes. We look forward to serving you in the coming year.

James M Crawford, MD, PhD
Editor-in-Chief

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