

PEDIATRIC EDITORIAL

Pediatric highlights' fifth anniversary in the *International Journal of Obesity*

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This issue of the *International Journal of Obesity (IJO)* marks the fifth anniversary of the appearance of the Pediatric Highlights section. It has been a period of tremendous growth and recognition in the field of general obesity, but an even greater growth in the field of pediatric obesity. The editors would like to give recognition to Angelo Pietrobelli and Kate Steinbeck, the associate editors in charge of the Pediatric Highlights section, to *IJO* and Nature Publishing Group (NPG) for agreeing to test the concept of a periodic section devoted to pediatric obesity, and to the editorial staff of *IJO* for all their hard work in making this section a success.

The history of *IJO's* Pediatric Highlights section began in 2002 when Angelo Pietrobelli remarked that the field of pediatric obesity did not have a journal of its own and inquired whether we thought it was time for such a journal. An analysis of the number of papers being submitted to *IJO* and the quality of the papers led to the conclusion that an independent pediatric obesity journal probably would not have sufficient submissions to be successful. However, the seed was planted and a dialogue initiated with Angelo and the Pediatric Obesity Interest Group in the United States and the European Childhood Obesity Group in Europe, regarding a home for papers on pediatric obesity. A plan was formulated to have a section devoted to papers on pediatric obesity in several *IJO* issues each year. One or two experts in pediatric obesity would be responsible for selecting the most worthy articles around given themes and commissioning an invited review for each specialty issue. The chosen articles would be featured prominently at the beginning of the specialty issues. This plan was submitted to the *IJO* editors and NPG, who approved it with enthusiasm. Angelo Pietrobelli of Verona University Medical School, Italy and Kate Steinbeck of the University of Sydney, Australia were invited to become associate editors of this section. After some discussion, the term 'Pediatric Highlights' was chosen as the name for the section, which was to appear in the January, April, July and October issues. The concept was

announced to the obesity community through editorials in *IJO* and personal communications to pediatric obesity specialists around the world.

The first issue of Pediatric Highlights appeared in *IJO's* January 2004 issue. To give some perspective, in the year 2000, there were only 541 published papers that appeared in PubMed using the search terms children, obesity and human. By 2003, there still were only 871 pediatric obesity papers identified. With the publicity and the promise of a home for papers specifically designated as pediatric obesity, research increased considerably. In 2004, the first year of *IJO's* Pediatric Highlights, the number of pediatric obesity submissions increased significantly and a PubMed search revealed that 1158 papers were published in the field. The number has grown each year, and in 2007, the last year for which complete figures are available, 1791 papers on pediatric obesity were published. The quality of papers has increased equally dramatically and the rapid increase in submissions in the area of pediatric obesity has led to the creation of a new journal sponsored by the International Association for the Study of Obesity.

The Pediatric Highlights articles are valuable to the field and are consistently in *IJO's* annual top 10 cited list of articles. They are very well read and are the most frequently downloaded articles from the *IJO* website each year. Pediatric submissions account for about 21% of *IJO* submissions and an average of six pediatric obesity papers are published in each Pediatric Highlights issue.

Forsaking modesty, *IJO* takes credit for helping to stimulate interest among investigators in pediatric obesity and for providing the first designated home for such papers in a medical journal. Investigators from the pediatric obesity field have rewarded *IJO* by making it a preferred journal for some of the best papers in this field. We look forward to continue serving the field and publishing the very best papers in pediatric obesity each year.

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