
EDITORIAL

Reflections on *Pediatric Research*

This issue of *Pediatric Research* is being published during the final month of my five-year term as Editor-in-Chief. The cover illustration we have created contains many of the images used on our covers during the last five years. The images reflect the broad scope of studies related to childhood disease and development that we have published. These include articles on molecular biology, tissue pathology, developmental biology, clinical care, and normal childhood development and activities.

During our term of office, my Editors and I have made many changes in the journal to accommodate the rapidly expanding field of pediatric research, make it accessible to our readers, and convey its importance to our potential audience. We developed Commentary and Research News sections, solicited and published more Reviews and series of Reviews, and began to publish Meeting Reports. These special articles have supplemented the major role of the journal, which is the review and publication of important, original research studies. It is gratifying to have watched the high quality of our articles continue to rise and to see this reflected in a recent increase in our impact factor.

It is clear that research has contributed much to the health of children. Looking back over the years of my career in pediatric medicine, I remember the terror of poliomyelitis, the exchange transfusions for Rh disease, the morbidity and mortality of measles, and what seemed to be the inevitability of death from malignant disease. Basic and applied research has eliminated or lessened those, and other threats to children. Many of these achievements are documented in our ongoing series on the history of pediatric specialties. If one ever questions the importance of research for child health, one need only reflect on the diseases that have been conquered.

There is one particular image on the cover of this issue that I wish to highlight. It is the photograph of a mother and child in Mongolia. The image is important because it reminds us of the many people that have historically not received the benefit of the majority of scientific research.

The abundant resources and expertise of scientists and clinicians in wealthier countries have made major contributions to child health. Yet, the amount of research devoted to problems of major importance to the developing world is very small. The much-discussed "10/90 Gap" (*i.e.* only 10 per cent of money spent on medical research is focused on diseases causing 90 per cent of the world's health problems) is a matter of great urgency to all of those engaged in the advancement of child health.

During my term as Editor-in-Chief, we began publishing our journal electronically. Subsequently, we worked with the World Health Organization, our publisher, Lippincott Williams & Wilkins, and our online production team at HighWire Press to provide the electronic version of the journal free-of-charge to professionals in developing countries. While we feel this has been an important step, we know that much more is needed.

Our great interest in advancing child health throughout the world has led to an independent initiative called "The Programme for Global Paediatric Research." This is a union of societies and individuals, scientists and clinicians, throughout the world, joining together to encourage and facilitate international collaboration on research into issues affecting global childhood health and development. Current participants in this program include the American Pediatric Society, the Chinese Pediatric Society, the Japanese Pediatric Society, the Society for Pediatric Research, the International Pediatric Association, and many individuals devoted to this important issue.

The first Programme for Global Paediatric Research Symposium will be held at the Annual Meeting of the American Pediatric Academic Societies, on May 4, 2004. Details of the programme and symposium can be found on the *Pediatric Research* website: www.pedresearch.org.

As I move on from the journal to this exciting new project, I will continue to closely follow the advances and achievements of pediatric research that will appear in the future issues of the journal.

I have enjoyed my five years as Editor-in-Chief of *Pediatric Research*. During this time I have been fortunate to work with an outstanding team of Editors, who contributed tirelessly through the manuscript review and selection process and in their advisory roles regarding policies and directions for the journal. I am grateful also to my colleagues in the European office for the work they have done. Finally I wish to thank our international team of Consulting Editors for their advice and assistance.

I am pleased that my successor is Dr. Sherin Devaskar, an outstanding pediatric scientist. She and her colleagues at the University of California, Los Angeles, will undoubtedly contribute immeasurably to the advancement of the journal as it continues to publish studies aimed at improving our knowledge and care of children around the world.

Alvin Zipursky
Editor-in-Chief