

Swiss Medical Weekly: launching into 2009

To our Readers:

I was appointed to chair the Swiss Medical Weekly Editorial Board last year. While I am eager to get on with the job, I am well aware that stiff challenges lay ahead. After the SMW impact factor's jump from 0.3 to 1.5 in recent years, we are now setting our sights on a further jump to 3.0.

However, this ambitious goal has its advantages: the hurdle will only be cleared if our journal constantly improves what it offers to readers and authors. And this is no longer merely a question of ambition: it is the genuine task of any journal.

In 2008 346 manuscripts (294 in 2007) were submitted. The website had 60'000 visits per month. Direct links from Pubmed to the full text articles on the SMW website numbered 6000 to 8000 per month.

The high rejection quota (69% in 2008, 64% in 2007) shows that our goal is quality, not quantity. Nevertheless, we find that the journal's finished individual issues are still rather slim. Accordingly, in 2009 we intend to increase the number of articles per issue. But since there will be no change in our quality standards for original articles, we shall adopt a different approach in increasing the number of pages: in 2009 two new sections of the journal will appear on an alternating basis – "Medical intelligence" and "Current opinion". For these we shall be inviting prominent clinical and experimental scientists to provide contributions, and, at the same time, shall

thereby be meeting a long felt need for material aimed at a more "general science" readership.

SMW is one of the few journals with an impact factor worthy of the name which have introduced and consistently maintained the "open access" concept so strongly supported by the academic community. Our aim is to assist in providing broadbased and low cost access to specialist medical literature. Of particular interest to authors is the introduction of ahead-of-print publication, with instant linking via the SMW website from Pubmed to full text articles accepted for publication. In 2009, thanks to a new software tool, the reviewing process will be much more transparent and, hopefully, speedier. We shall continue, as in the past, to insist on professional statistical evaluation of manuscripts.

I take this opportunity of expressing heartfelt gratitude to our readers for their loyalty and our authors for choosing SMW. The journal's success would of course be impossible without the great commitment of our national and international reviewers. A list of reviewers will, as usual, be found at the end of this issue.

Particularly warm thanks are due to Andreas Schaffner, who, as Editor in Chief, provided the steady guiding hand which saw Swiss Medical Weekly through the difficult transition to English as its language of publication.

André P. Perruchoud, Editor in Chief SMW