

2005 — Honing our art and our science

Despite the constant addition of new biomedical journal titles worldwide, and the development of a multitude of online open-access journals, the *MJA* is handling more manuscripts than ever before and calling on more and more reviewers to help us maintain the quality of the articles we publish. The names of the 1251 people who have reviewed manuscripts for the Journal in the 12 months from November 2004 to October 2005 are listed below. Their contribution is invaluable and we are extremely grateful for their help.

Despite the increasing volume of submissions, our time from receiving a manuscript to a decision (accept or reject) and our time from accepting a manuscript to publication continue to decrease (see Box). To further increase our efficiency, we switched over to a web-based manuscript submission and tracking system in July, which automates many of the time-consuming steps in manuscript processing, and also allows authors to log on to check the progress of their manuscripts. We're nearly over the teething problems with the new system, and are expecting even faster manuscript turnaround times next year.

Most general medical journals have a website, but access is generally partial or restricted to subscribers. The *eMJA* website (<http://www.mja.com.au>) is unusual in offering free online access to all articles. This policy promotes Australian research worldwide and provides high-quality health care information to all who may need it. The *eMJA* website currently receives up to 15000 visitors per day, who

draw widely on the thousands of articles now available in our archive. Authors who wish to reach a wide audience should consider the *MJA*'s open-access policy when deciding where to submit their papers. We also offer rapid online publication (ahead of print) for articles of urgent public health importance.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health remains a priority for the *MJA* — each year we devote a special issue to this subject. This year we also awarded the inaugural Dr Ross Ingram Memorial Prize (\$5000) for the best essay on Indigenous health (see our 16 May issue). High quality research is also rewarded, with the *MJA*/Wyeth Prize of \$10000 now in its 10th year (see our 14 August issue).

The *science* of journalology (yes, there is such a thing and we take it very seriously!) was examined at the Fifth International Congress on Peer Review and Biomedical Publication in Chicago in September this year. *MJA* Deputy Editor Mabel Chew presented her research on just how rubbery and manipulable the figures known as "impact factors" (often used to rate journals, articles, authors and job applicants) are. The *art* of journalology was discussed at a workshop "On getting published" conducted by the *MJA* with the Woolcock Institute of Medical Research in August.

As always, we wish you a merry festive season and hope you find plenty to amuse, entertain and inform you in this special double issue.

**Bronwyn Gaut**

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The fate of *MJA* manuscripts 2000–2005

	2000–2001	2001–2002	2002–2003	2003–2004	2004–2005
<b>Manuscripts (accepted/received)</b>					
Total	745/1384 (65%)	685/1314 (64%)	702/1397 (61%)	738/1422 (62%)	685/1457 (59%)
Research	77/340 (23%)	83/345 (24%)	72/335 (20%)	72/327(22%)	59/361 (16%)
Cases	23/80 (29%)	22/75 (29%)	16/86 (19%)	19/97(20%)	26/121 (21%)
Reviews	5/22 (23%)	8/38 (25%)	7/43 (16%)	11/50 (22%)	7/36 (19%)
Letters	255/420 (61%)	213/387(55%)	242/422 (57%)	242/381 (63%)	217/365 (59%)
<b>Mean time (days)</b>					
To reject	26	59	40	40	24
To accept	124	95	114	80	79
From acceptance to publication	83	76	65	69	61
<b>Number of reviewers used</b>	1020	1090	1180	1185	1251
<b>Impact factor</b>	1.92	1.79	1.67	1.73	2.00

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01/11/2004 – 31/10/2005

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