Editorial

40 years of the Journal of Perinatal Medicine

The Journal of Perinatal Medicine (JPM) is celebrating its 40 years of publication. It was first published in 1973 (Figure 1) and was the first scientific journal in the field of perinatal medicine. Although the contribution by Dr. Erich Saling (in this issue) goes into the historical details of the initial phase of the JPM, it mainly focuses on how the JPM is responding to its current aims and responsibilities.

Over the past 40 years, JPM has grown significantly in all respects. This is reflected by the increasing number of annual submissions and readers as well as the increasing impact within the scientific community. Since 1992, JPM has been the official journal of the World Association of Perinatal Medicine (WAPM). The close collaboration between WAPM and JPM can be traced back to this initiative. To date, all participants of WAPM have free online access to JPM. The cooperation between JPM and WAPM started during the presidency of Dr. Asim Kurjak, who served as the Coordinating Editor for JPM since 2001. We thank him deeply for his loyal, efficient, and longstanding service and promotion of JPM. In the future, Dr. Frank Chervenak, the past President of WAPM, will take over this task.

Our publisher, de Gruyter, is one of the oldest scientific publishers in the world. It was founded in 1918 through the merger of different publishing houses, some of which were founded as early as in the 18th century. For more than 260 years, the name de Gruyter has been synonymous with high-quality, landmark publications in the humanities and natural sciences and with famous names like Friedrich Nietzsche and Arthur Schopenhauer. The portfolio includes theology, philosophy, history, classical studies, linguistics and communications, literary studies, library and information science, art and music, law, mathematics, physics, materials science, chemistry, biology, and medicine. By 2012 number of scientific journals published by de Gruyter has increased to 235.

The publisher as well as the editors have always attached great importance to quality. Whenever the editors accept a paper for publication in JPM, they consider its value for elucidating the physiology and pathophysiology regarding pregnancy and the newborn and its potential to promote the possible change and improvement of practice in perinatal care of the mother and the child. The editors aspire to publish clinical and translational research, but all this would not be possible without the invaluable and inspiring contributions of many scientists.

How do we keep JPM attractive for readers, scientists, clinicians, authors, and reviewers alike? The editors and the editorial staff try to create a journal that publishes evidence-based, clinically relevant papers (scientific and editorial independent and integer). We wish to communicate with the authors and readers and to realize rapid publication times. Last but not least, the constant aim is to increase JPM’s impact factor (Figure 2).

The impact factor is still the most important indicator to show the reputation of a journal. We can discuss its usefulness (“The agony and the ecstasy – the history and meaning of the journal impact factor”, E. Garfield, 2005), but its authority is undisputed. However, in some areas, such as the ranking of universities, university hospitals, or budget negotiations, the impact factor may not suitable.

In addition to original research articles, reviews, congress proceedings, and abstracts of WAPM, JPM also publishes a good deal of guidelines and expert opinions (see Reference). It is astonishing that some globally published guidelines referencing the same evidence-based literature make different recommendations. The broad definitions used for making clinical recommendations and describing the methodology may pose difficulty for practical use and, at times, are dangerous. (It is crucial that the definitions used in the guidelines

Figure 1  Cover of the first issue of the Journal of Perinatal Medicine.
and other forms of scientific work are clear and precise.) The need for an international collaboration in guideline development is obvious. The National Guideline Clearinghouse at the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality at the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services may be an exemplary model of an institution that can undertake such a task. JPM is keen to be the catalyst of the international cooperation in guideline attunement.

Although the Internet has dramatically changed the way we access information on scientific research, the demand for printed versions of articles remains high for our readers. Although the addition of the online publication and other electronic formats such as videos and podcasts, which allow very quick ahead-of-print publishing, is undisputed, the print publication will remain as a complement to the way we supply information to our readers in the future.

Since January 2011, the editorial procedure of all submitted manuscripts includes a similarity check (plagiarism check) using iThenticate. By using this tool, we aim to eliminate manuscripts with a high similarity index. We found many submitted papers with a similarity index higher than 50%, and we ask for all authors’ understanding that, in terms of scientific fairness, we will continue to reject these papers also in the future.

We are grateful to our authors (both scientists and clinicians), readers, editors, and the Managing Editor (Ingrid Gruenberg) for their help and support. We thank the past and present presidents of WAPM, Drs. Asim Kurjak, Frank Chervenak, and Xavier Carbonell-Estrany, for their cooperation and valuable advice. We also thank Drs. Isaac Bernstein, Eduardo Bancalari, and Anne Greenough for editing and reviewing the manuscripts. We rejoice to have the support of Dr. Roberto Romero who has always provided us with excellent advice. We thank our peer reviewers who kindly agreed to evaluate submitted papers. Their work is helpful for the editors and is of great value for the scientific community.

The feedback of the readers is welcomed by the editors and the editorial staff. This feedback will help us to continue our mission to be an important journal in the field of perinatal medicine.

References


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