



Editorial Review of 2005

2005 saw another year of significant progress for the EJSO. Some years ago, we set out to develop the then European Journal of Surgical Oncology as a respected, high quality journal of record for the worldwide community of cancer surgeons. Starting from the comfortable base of a small, regional journal with a modest impact factor and print circulation, we have moved a long way to fulfilling our aim, aided by a clear vision, a relentless and uncompromising drive for clear, concise and compact scientific writing, and most of all by the wonders of modern digital technology.

In terms of our international vision, we have moved away from the regionalism implicit in our original title with the adoption by Thomson Scientific of the acronym EJSO for the calculation of our Impact Factor for 2005 onwards. We have also adopted the byline “The Journal of Cancer Surgery” as a clear descriptor of our purpose for those less familiar with the arcane technocracy of “Surgical Oncology”. Many of our manuscripts are now sourced from outside Europe, and we are particularly pleased at the substantial growth in the flow of manuscripts of a very high standard and interest from colleagues in Asia, including China, Korea, Japan and Taiwan. We are also pleased to have broadened the subspeciality coverage of the Journal in areas of clinical practice such as Gynaecological Oncology, and in general interest areas such as quality assurance and best practice guidelines, as witnessed by various of our special issues and supplements.

The Internet has brought the most dramatic gains to the Journal, whose content is now accessible world wide, and to huge numbers of academic users through Elsevier’s ScienceDirect Portal. This allows institutional users access to whole article downloads, of which there were some 105,000 in 2005, up from 70,000 the previous year. This is a dramatic transformation of the fortunes and projection of a journal with a society based circulation of some 2000 members.

The printed journal remains our core product, but we have no illusions about the importance and utility of the Internet to our future growth and worldwide leadership strategy. The internet brings new tools, such as search engines, to simplify and expedite access to the world’s store

of scientific information for clinicians, editors and reviewers.

One of the more onerous aspects of Journal Editorship is the moral responsibility to help police the world scientific literature for publication fraud, which can range from the trivial to the criminally irresponsible. We are dependent upon our reviewers and readers to identify fraud, but are hugely helped in the duplicate publication and other forms of fraud by the power of modern search engines, which allow rapid and convenient cross checking of all the output of each and every author who submits to us.

The EJSO is not immune to efforts at fraud, and a few particular examples have come to light in the recent past. Editors and publishers have limited powers in these matters and our sanctions are generally restricted to exposure and publicity. The ripples of fraud cases spread out, and damage the reputations of host institutions and national professional bodies. It is up to the local bodies and organisations to act and to be seen to act vigorously in these cases, not least to protect the reputations of the majority of honest and conscientious researchers around them. We have been vigorous in alerting the relevant parties of our concerns, and will continue to be so.

Technology has also allowed us to modernise our own systems. The Elsevier Editorial System allows for substantial digitisation of the publication process, including online submission, review and editing of submitted manuscripts. New software brings a number of advantages in terms of speed and efficiency of the mechanical aspects of publishing, and we hope that all of our users will make full use of the capabilities of the system. As is always the case with the introduction of new software systems, there are teething troubles and glitches, which have come to light, and we apologise and beg the indulgence of those of our reviewers and authors who may have come across them.

There remain many aspects of the publication process, which cannot satisfactorily be replicated by software. The written word is a tool of communication by people for people, and the formal processes of editing and peer review in journal production introduce an independent third party adjudication into this communication, which in turn add quality, judgement and expertise to the publication process. We believe that these functions are essential to the advancement of the literature and human knowledge,

and that they add substantial value over unedited self publication material on the Internet, such as is now possible on a number of Internet sites and through autonomous web sites and web blogs.

We are grateful as ever to all those in the international professional community who help us to produce the EJSO. Your Journal is a collective effort of our reviewers, our authors, our editors, our publishers and our subscribers. We remain committed to the pursuit of excellence and clarity in the written word. Human anatomy, physiology and surgical

best practice are unchanging, but technology and the human mind throw up new opportunities for creative thinking and new ways of looking at our professional universe. We hope that we will in consequence be the first port of call for the best and most interesting writing and original clinical science that cancer surgery has to offer through 2006 and beyond.

David Rew
Editor-in-Chief