



Journal of Hepatology: The home of liver research

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It is with great pride, pleasure, and humility that I take over as Editor in Chief of the *Journal of Hepatology* from Professor Didier Samuel. It is of historical interest to note that the Editorial base of the Journal is returning to the Royal Free Hospital in London where it started 30 years ago by Dame Sheila Sherlock. From the very humble beginnings, the Journal has had a rapid and impressive growth, with an increase in impact factor from 4.97 in 2002 to 10.4 in 2013. This has occurred in parallel with the amazing growth of the European Association for the Study of Liver (EASL), which has become a truly International organization, evidenced by the attendance of more than 10,000 registrants from all over the world. Incidentally, 2014 is also the 50th anniversary of EASL. Over the past 5 years under Didier's leadership, the Journal has made huge progress, improving enormously its readability, increasing the submission of original articles from 1600 to 2100 per year and the number of downloads from 600K to 1.1M. Of note, at present, 40% original articles originate in Asia, 18% are from the USA and 36% are from Europe, indicating the truly International nature of the Journal.

The current Editorial team will attempt to build further on this success. The Journal will remain the forum for publication of new scientific discoveries, novel clinical observations, evidence based changes in treatment paradigms or any other advancements in the understanding of liver pathobiology and disease. If an author has great scientific, technical or clinical observations they want to publish, they should think of the *Journal of Hepatology* first. We will continue to ensure that the process of submission is easy and the peer-review process fair, rapid, and transparent. If you have a great idea for a review, we encourage you to contact us to see whether this is suitable for the Journal. As the number of submissions to the Journal increases, unfortunately, many excellent papers will not find a place in the Journal. We are all aware of the enormous amount of time one spends preparing a paper for submission and then to receive an early rejection seems very unfair. In order to make the submission process easy and quick, we are therefore introducing a relatively painless submission process; '*Your paper, Your way*', which means that within reason, we will review your paper without special requirements concerning formatting of the article, references, figures, and tables, as long as the scientific content of the paper can be evaluated. The new guidelines for authors will describe these basic requirements.

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We also recognize the need in a small number of cases for a '*Fast-Track Review*' and rapid publication, which we will introduce. This will be suitable for 'breakthrough' observations, high impact clinical trials, and some exceptional scientific discoveries. A pathway for such a *Fast-Track Review* is being introduced.

The large number of papers submitted from Asia is a reflection of the burden of disease and increasing scientific enterprise in these geographical areas. Despite the large number of papers submitted from Asia the acceptance rates are still relatively low. But it is clear that the rates of acceptance are starting to increase and no doubt, in the recent future, Asia will catch up with the West. The *Journal of Hepatology* sees itself as a global journal tackling a global problem. Understanding the differences in disease characteristics and the influence of genetic, dietary, environmental, and socio-political factors on the manifestations of liver diseases and their treatment can provide a new understanding. In order to make the contents of the Journal available to a larger audience, we have launched a Chinese and a Russian translation of the Journal. Furthermore, we are working on a proposal to start a section that will focus on '*Global issues in Hepatology*'.

Governance in publication is a rapidly emerging important issue, which the new team is taking seriously. In response to the need, Professor Richard Moreau, who was an Editor with the previous Editorial team will act as a Senior Editor, looking at governance issues in relation to the Journal. Plagiarism and unethical practices in science and publication are a sad but real problem. Although, rebuttals regarding decisions made by the Editorial Board are strongly discouraged, there will be occasional cases where genuine mistakes have been made, and in a small number of cases the Senior Editor will step in to review the decision making process. Conflicts of interest are an inevitable part of life for an academic researcher or a clinician and Professor Moreau will ensure, that when these are present, they are fully declared and adequate provisions are made to guarantee that the authors get a fair peer-review.

I will be helped in running the Journal by Professor Jessica Zucmann-Rossi, Professor Thomas Berg and Professor Ramon Bataller, who are well-known experts in their own field, and will in most instances be responsible for papers dealing with basic science and cancer; viral hepatitis; and alcoholic and non-alcoholic fatty liver disease, respectively. They bring a huge amount of energy, expertise, scientific brilliance, and imagination, which I hope indicates to the submitting authors that we are ready to engage with high-quality basic science, while maintaining a very strong clinical focus and a full dedication to editorial excellence. Fig. 1 describes the complete list of

Editorial

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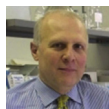
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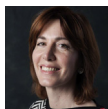
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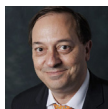
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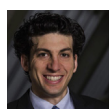
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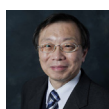
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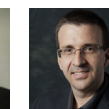
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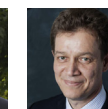
Reviews, Seminars and Debates



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Snapshot



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Fig. 1. Complete list of Associate Editors, Special Section Editors, and the Editorial team.

the Associate Editors, Special Section Editors, and the Editorial team, who are all leaders in their chosen field. The Journal office is based in Geneva, co-located within the EASL office. Joel Walicki leads an amazing team supported by Ursula Loizides, (Editorial Coordinator) and Sophie Jarlier (Graphic designer). Sybrand Boer Iwema from Elsevier will provide us with the publishing support.

There will be few changes in the format of the articles with the modification/introduction of new sections. These are briefly described below:

1. *Original Articles*. We recognize that although over 90% of scientific articles fit into a standard format available in the Journal,

about 10% do not. Taking this into account, we are introducing four additional types of *Original Articles*:

- a. *Theory Articles*: These articles will describe modelling studies, which are mainly theoretical.
- b. *Resource Articles*: These articles will describe technical advances in science or in the practice of Hepatology.
- c. *Matters arising Articles*: These articles will be specially formatted to allow publication of papers that directly contradict a previously published paper in the *Journal of Hepatology*.
- d. *Brief Communications*: They will be very high impact articles that concisely describe highly novel and innovative findings.

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2. *Review Articles*. Most review articles will be of the classical type focussing on a given topic. In addition, we will introduce the following new types of *Review Articles*:
 - a. *Seminars*: These will be larger review articles, focussed on a broad subject, typically multi-authored, describing basic, translational and clinical aspects of a problem.
 - b. *Clinical Trial Watch*: This section will be a description of clinical trial activities, reported at specialized and large International meetings. Articles should also focus on the therapeutic aspects of specific diseases.
 - c. *Pro-Con Debates*: This section will be a pro-con debate on relevant topics, written by two authors providing opposing views on a given topic. A pre-selected moderator will provide introductory and concluding statements. All three authors will share the final authorship.
3. *Grand Rounds in Hepatology*: This section will mainly focus on education and should include case based discussions. Articles are usually by invitation only, but approaching the Editorial office with ideas is welcome. The idea for this section is that articles are written by a multidisciplinary team rather than an individual, reflecting the practice in Hepatology units, with reference to the literature in case there are deviations.
4. *Public Engagement and Affairs*: We believe that articles published in the Journal should be accessible to the lay public or patients and as such we will introduce a short 'lay summary' for each published paper. Also, we will introduce a new section that will deal with Hepatology issues that are relevant to policy makers or funders, or deal with issues that may allow discussion about global issues in Hepatology.

It is clear to the team that the way we read articles in the Journal has changed a lot over the past years with a rapid migration to hand-held devices, such as mobile phones and tablets. The publisher and the Editorial team have worked hard to provide bespoke solutions to improve the quality of articles on these devices. We are aware that there is room for improvement, in particular regarding readability of articles and the downloadable web material. We have plans to address these requirements. In addition, there are substantial plans to further improve the web page, with the introduction of an expanded and more involved role of the Web-Editors. We will try to put more effort into highlighting articles, using interviews with authors of papers and provide focussed insights in an easily readable format.

Although EASL is already 50 years old, I see Hepatology as a specialty that is just 'coming of age' because it is only now that we are getting to grips with the pathobiology of disease, new treatments are becoming available that have the potential to change the way we practice Hepatology and provide for the first time real hope for patients. Therefore, I feel extremely privileged to be in this amazing position of leading this great Journal in this exciting time of positive growth. I am going to conclude by thanking the many, many individuals, including my mentors, my family, friends, and colleagues who have sacrificed a lot of their time and energy to allow me to get to this point. Finally, I want to thank the EASL Governing Board for giving me this fantastic opportunity, responsibility, and honour.