EDITORIAL

The American Journal of Pathology, Value Beyond Simple Metrics

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Scientific publishing has changed dramatically during the past 25 years. Gone are the days of automatically receiving your own personal copy of the journal in the (snail) mail along with your society membership or rushing to the institutional library to check on the arrival of new issues of one's favorite journals and leafing through the table of contents to find articles of interest. An explosion in the number of scientific journals providing authors new options for disseminating their research findings and the wide availability of individual articles divorced from the rest of a journal's content have led to the widely held, but arguably mistaken, perception that journal value rests exclusively on the frequency with which its articles are cited. Let me be clear, citations matter. They matter to authors, journal editors, publishers, and the scientific community at large. I applaud the many new and readily available analytical tools that can be used to assess individual publications regardless of where they were published. These tools have helped to refocus assessment of individual investigators from where did he or she publish to what did he or she publish; this is a marked improvement over previous misguided attempts to define an individual's scientific achievements based on the impact factors of the journals in which they have published.

As Editor-in-Chief of *The American Journal of Pathology* (*AJP*), I pay attention to journal metrics and strive to make the *Journal* as impactful as possible by publishing significant articles on the mechanisms of disease pathogenesis. We have been successful in this regard, as evidenced last year by approximately 40,000 citations, more than one million downloads of *AJP* publications, and a number one ranking for Eigenfactor score (0.05638) for pathology journals. However, journal metrics alone do not adequately measure the value of *AJP*. More important, *AJP* is the official journal of the American Society for Investigative Pathology (ASIP), which includes an impressive membership dedicated to advancing experimental pathology research. Their collective commitment to both scientific rigor and creativity helps

establish a level of excellence for the *Journal* that permeates its review process and the articles selected for publication. I recently attended the ASIP-sponsored Pathobiology for Investigators, Students, and Academicians meeting in Houston, Texas, and was impressed with the remarkable advances being made in pathology-related research. The meeting was subtitled Breakthroughs in Biology: From Underlying Pathogenesis to Translational Medicine and covered topics from flesh-eating pathogens to the role of exosomes in cancer metastases and the potential involvement of microbiome metabolites in human inflammatory diseases. These and other exciting discoveries can be found in each volume of *AJP*. The ASIP and *AJP* are two sides of the same coin, and the depth and breadth of scientific interests in the ASIP ensures that *AJP* has the expertise to fairly review potential articles and provide constructive comments to submitting authors regardless of final publication decision.

We have also introduced additional changes to further increase the value of *AJP* to authors and readers. More important, the cost of publishing in the *Journal* has been reduced by simplifying page charges with the elimination of separate charges for color figures, tables, and supplemental data. We have expanded the *AJP* Open Choice program to offer a full Open Access CC BY-NC-ND license, and increased the number of freely available online articles in each monthly issue through the Editor's Choice program. ASIP members continue to receive a waiver of the submission processing fee, reduced page charges on accepted manuscripts, and reduced charges on the Open Access fees, in addition to free access to the

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Journal online. We have broadened the scope of the *Journal* to include translational medicine, human disease classification, and emerging areas of investigative pathology interest and anticipate that this broader scope will lead to increased citations. During the past 2 months, we have also transitioned to a more user-friendly manuscript

submission/review/tracking system. Finally, we have increased the vitality of our Editorial Board by increasing its diversity and scientific expertise.

I invite you to add value to the *Journal* by becoming a member of the ASIP and participating as an author, reviewer, and participant in Society and *Journal* activities.