Wider horizons

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At its most simple the function of this Journal is to invite submissions covering as wide an area of orthopaedic surgery as possible, submit them to a rigorous system of peer review, choose those that represent the best clinical and basic science, edit them so that their message is clearly and unambiguously stated and then publish them. It is clearly incumbent upon us, when considering both authors and readers, to ensure that this process is carried out as quickly as possible so that contributions retain their originality. We receive about 1100 papers each year and publish about 15%, and these figures remain constant. Some, particularly those which require extensive modification both by the authors and the editorial staff, may not be published for more than a year after acceptance. By increasing to 12 issues per year, we hope to include about 60 more clinical papers annually and, hopefully, to increase the acceptance rate slightly and shorten the time to publication. Our aim is to offer a reviewing process which gives a final opinion within six weeks of submission and an editorial process which ensures publication within three months of acceptance.

The increase in the number of issues will also allow us to publish more material both of broad general interest such as review articles and of more specialist interest such as annotations and aspects of current management. We have during recent years increased the number of our reviewers and now have (as listed at the back of this issue) about 250 available to us from 23 countries and this will hopefully encourage more international contributions. We continue to work closely with EORT and this year is the 75th anniversary of the founding of SICOT which we will be marking with an editorial next month.

Original material increasingly includes references to classification systems, statistical packages and an extended bibliography. These, for reason of space, cannot be accommodated within the pages of the Journal. This material will now be available on our website (www.jbjs.org.uk) which, as from this month, has a new host (HighWire).

The correspondence section of the Journal is particularly vulnerable to the passage of time and loss of topicality. We plan therefore to put the majority of letters and responses from authors on the website. Currently archive material back to 1996 is available on the website and this will be extended later this year to all archive material from our foundation in 1948. Other new features will include an occasional commissioned expert opinion on specific papers and enhanced alerting options.

I hope that authors will appreciate a faster reviewing and editorial process as well as a slightly increased acceptance rate, that readers will appreciate the increased number of issues and that both will enjoy the new facilities available on the website.