

## Editorial

## The Road to Travel

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During the 1990s, the number of printed scientific and medical journals approached 100,000 worldwide. During the past decade, the total has increased further because of the burgeoning of the internet; online journals have taken an ever-increasing share of the market because they avoid printing and distribution costs, do not impose high purchase costs on institutions or individuals, and are often freely accessible by the public. Since the publishing outlets for scientific and medical articles are already so numerous, what need is there for more? What does *Biomedicine International* provide for its authors and readers that other journals do not?

The online submission, reviewing and access system is sensible in view of modern technology – it is efficient and inexpensive – but it is hardly unique. But *Biomedicine International* is distinctive in other ways. For reviewing, it relies mainly on its editorial board members, not on external referees. Peer reviewing is assumed to be a guarantee of quality, but studies to date have not supported this assumption. They show that the process is slow, expensive, ineffective, something of a lottery, prone to bias and abuse, and hopeless at spotting errors and fraud. Drummond Rennie, deputy editor of *JAMA*, remarked that “if peer reviewing were a drug, it would never get on to the market”. The editors of a journal, however, have a vested interest in ensuring that their reviews are efficient, effective, fair and

unbiased, and they are accountable if they publish erroneous or fraudulent work. *Biomedicine International* is therefore organized to avoid the defects of peer reviewing in a way that sets an example to other journals. We also encourage submissions from authors in developing countries that have until recently lacked scientific and medical research traditions. One of our key policies is to support the establishment of research bases in those countries by helping their doctors and scientists to publish their work. Few if any established journals treat this as a priority because the policy is not profitable for their publishers. In addition, we are prepared to publish articles on a wide range of topics related to biology and medicine, as well as a variety of article types (original research articles, review articles, case reports, hypotheses, study protocols and letters). This first issue illustrates the point clearly. It includes Derakhshan's comprehensive review of brain laterality in regard to attention and consciousness, an anatomical analysis of the sinus of Morgagni by Tubbs et al., the pharmaceutically relevant study of drug solubilities in ethanol-water mixtures by Jouyban et al., a physical anthropological study by Oladipo et al., an important investigation of cardiac abnormalities associated with maintenance hemodialysis by Khosroshahi and colleagues, an observation of referred shoulder pain during peritoneal dialysis by Ardalan et al., a fascinating account of the medieval medical manuscripts of Baku by Alakbarli and Hajiyeva, and a letter describing the mimicking of liver malignancy by alveolar echinococcosis. We intend to maintain this range and variety of topics and article types in future issues so that potential authors will not be deterred by the focus of the journal. This year, 2010, we intend to offer our first Young Investigator Award, which will include an honorarium of

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1000 US dollars to an author under the age of 40 who makes the best contribution to the journal as judged by the editorial board. Once again, our aim in offering this Award is to stimulate and encourage research, especially in developing countries. The future of scientific and medical research obviously depends on its younger practitioners. We believe that this and other journals should do everything they can to support their endeavours.