

# The Netherlands Journal of Medicine entering a next era

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Five years ago the editorship of *the Netherlands Journal of Medicine* moved from Nijmegen to Amsterdam.<sup>1</sup> The year 2014 will mark the transfer of the editorial team of *the Netherlands Journal of Medicine* to Rotterdam and the responsibility will pass to Dr. Paul van Daele of the Erasmus Medical Center in Rotterdam. When we took over the Journal in Amsterdam in 2009 we set ourselves a number of goals.

In the first place the aim of the Journal is to keep all internists informed of major developments within the broad discipline of Internal Medicine. To achieve that goal we tried to increase the number of high-quality review manuscripts to at least 3-4 per issue. Indeed, this journal category attracted a lot of attention as illustrated by the large number of downloads and a relatively high citation rate.<sup>2</sup> Also some of our recent review articles were very highly cited and contributed for a major part to the visibility of the Journal.<sup>3-6</sup> A special subcategory is guidelines, which is also a well-read type of article with a very high profile.<sup>7-11</sup> Simultaneously, the relative value of guidelines for clinical medicine was critically appraised.<sup>12</sup> In the original article section we tried to publish papers with novel findings or great relevance for daily clinical practice. Some of these papers indeed attracted a lot of attention.<sup>13</sup> Other papers touched controversial issues and were also subject to debate and discussion.<sup>14-15</sup>

Our second aim was to further foster our role as an international journal. Obviously, the origin and name of the Journal may suggest a typical Dutch scope, but this is only true to a limited extent. Indeed, over the last five years our international submissions increased from 30% to 68%, with a more than fourfold increase in submissions.<sup>16</sup> The largest increase in submissions was seen from North America and from non-Western countries. Nevertheless, we did publish papers with a typical Dutch background, especially when we thought they could be of interest for an international readership as well.<sup>17,18</sup>

A third aim of *the Netherlands Journal of Medicine* is to provide a platform for our residents to publish short papers on interesting patients. Indeed, publication of one or two papers in a scientific journal is a requirement for our residents to obtain their license and although many of them participate in a research project, for some of the residents publication of an interesting or unusual patient or series of patients is an important means to fulfil this obligation.<sup>19</sup> Our case report and particularly our popular photo quiz sections contain these contributions. Although we do not exactly know how often these short articles are written by residents, we have the impression that many of our residents have taken the opportunity to publish in *the Netherlands Journal of Medicine* in recent years.

Lastly, our aim was to improve the impact factor of the Journal. This is obviously not a goal in itself, but we and others have noted that an increase in the impact factor leads to more and better submissions, which will result in a selection of even better papers for publication that eventually will further increase the impact factor. Over the last five years the impact factor of the Journal has steadily risen from 1.2 to almost 2.8.<sup>2</sup> This is not trivial as the vast majority of general medical journals have an impact factor of less than 2 and with its current impact factor *the Netherlands Journal of Medicine* belongs to the top-25 of international general medical journals. An increase in submissions and a fixed space for publication, however, invariably leads to a lower acceptance rate. Indeed, we have had to disappoint an increasing number of authors in recent years but on the positive side this did not stop many of them from continuing to submit papers to our Journal. We are very grateful for the help we have had in the last five years in producing and improving *the Netherlands Journal of Medicine*. A great part of the success was achieved by the enthusiastic and energetic support of our large group of junior associate editors. This group consisted of residents in training for Internal Medicine who had research

experience and obtained their PhD before they started their specialisation. They were responsible for the majority of the review work and the ensuing editorial decisions, and each of them handled many articles per year. The senior associate editors and editorial board were very helpful in commissioning and judging the many review articles that we published in recent years. Lastly, but importantly, the highly professional assistance of our publisher is gratefully acknowledged.

We are confident that *the Netherlands Journal of Medicine* will remain a high-quality monthly journal that is of value for every specialist interested in Internal Medicine in the world. We wish the new editors, headed by Paul van Daele, a lot of success and we hope that they will receive the same support and positive spirit from the scientific-medical community in the Netherlands and abroad that we have met during our editorship.

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