

Early Years of the *Journal of Andrology*

First Editor's Memoir

From the time that the American Society of Andrology (ASA) first came into existence, there were debates about creation of a specialty journal. Some members of the council and the Society felt that a US andrological journal would be important for the development of the field of Andrology in North America. Others, including myself, felt that the field of andrology was too small to support yet another journal in this field. It was argued that rather than creating a new journal, ASA should become cosponsor of the *International Journal of Andrology*, which was published in Europe. However, in 1978 when the ASA Council decided to launch a new journal and offered me a chance to be its first editor, I accepted this challenge. The Publication Committee, chaired by Dr Eugenia Rosenberg, negotiated a contract with Lippincott Co, and the *Journal of Andrology* was born.

The first editorial board consisted of Drs Nancy J. Alexander, Rupert P. Amann, Richard D. Amelar, Rudi Ansabacher, Martin Dym, Stuart S. Howards, Fernand Labrie, Thomas J. Lobl, Marie-Claire Orgebin-Crist, C. Alvin Paulsen, Kenneth L. Polskoski, Eugenia Rosenberg, Richard J. Sherins, Emil Steinberger, and Philip Troen. I selected this group, hoping these prominent figures in the field of Andrology would be reassuring to prospective authors.

Most members of the Council appeared confident that the journal would be successful. However, there was also a tangible feeling of concern and suspense. Would we receive enough manuscripts to allow timely publication of scheduled issues? Would the manuscripts be of high quality? I knew Dr Frank Comhaire, editor of the *International Journal of Andrology*, through a common interest in distribution of testosterone in different compartments of the testes. We both felt strongly that neither of us would consider doing anything to undermine the activities of the other journal; thus, our "competition" was friendly from the very beginning.

The first issue appeared in January 1980. It consisted of papers provided by members of the Council and the Editorial Board or submitted in response to our solicitations. Support provided by Society officers and Editorial Board members continued to be very important during the first years of the existence of the journal, but naturally, our success hinged on submission of manuscripts from outside this small group. I sent many letters to members of ASA and others soliciting manuscripts for the *Journal*. These included many individuals for whom I was able to "sign in" as members a few years earlier when ASA was created and I took on chair-

manship of the Membership Committee. Although manuscripts initially trickled in at a fairly low rate, it was clear to all of us that the *Journal* would not succeed if we did not maintain high standards of peer review and acceptance. I vividly remember the task of composing rejection letters that I hoped would not offend the authors or discourage them from submitting other manuscripts to the *Journal*.

We quickly developed a list of reliable reviewers. Those who were tardy and unresponsive to reminders will never know that they might have received a "black testis award" initiated by Lynn Rudloff, Editorial Assistant, duly marked on their index card in our address file.

I had a great deal to learn, including some technical aspects of journal production. We enjoyed an excellent working relationship with Lippincott. On several occasions, when the number of accepted manuscripts was particularly low, I had to find out from Lippincott what the "real" (ie, the absolute rather than our standard) deadline was for assuring that the new issue of the journal would appear on time.

Looking back at this exciting period, it is difficult not to be amazed by how much everything has changed since the early days of the *Journal*. Did the editorial office really function without e-mail and Fax? Many younger members of ASA might find it hard to believe when our journal was started, microsurgery of the male reproductive system was an exciting novelty, research on inhibin was considered controversial, automatic systems from analysis of sperm motility were yet to be developed, and if anyone had the foresight to contemplate the use of intracytoplasmic sperm injection, it certainly would have been labeled science fiction.

Gradually, the *Journal of Andrology* found its niche and a group of loyal supporters. We were certainly helped by the decision of the Institute for Scientific Information to include us in "Current Contents" almost from the start. Happily, our citation index quickly placed us at the top of the list of andrology journals.

In 1983, I resigned from the editorship because of election to vice-presidency of the ASA. In the hands of my successor, Dr Marie-Claire Orgebin-Crist, the *Journal of Andrology* grew in size, quality, and prestige, a trend that continues to this day.

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