Annual report

Annual report October 1999 to September 2000

This has been a very successful year for *Thorax*. The number of submissions to the journal has risen again, particularly for original research papers which have increased by 25% over the last two years (table 1). *Thorax* continues to attract original contributions from all over the world (table 2) and, from the Editors' perspective, it is clear that not only the quantity but also the quality of material now being submitted to the journal is substantially higher than when we took over the editorship five years ago. The impact factor for the journal has also risen substantially over the last two years,¹ and whether this measure drives or reflects the quality and number of our submissions is hard to tell. However, table 1 shows that, allowing a two year lag for impact factor figures to influence research submissions (for example, the 1996 impact factor is released in summer 1997 and so influences submissions in the year from October 1997 to September 1998), original research submissions to the journal went down after the release of an impact factor figure that had fallen, and went up after release of an impact factor figure that had increased. While there are clear arguments as to why impact factors are not

Table 1 Impact factor and articles submitted by category

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Impact factor	2.13	1.96	2.31	2.86	3.44	
Original research						
Full papers	493	415	411	398	453	505
Short papers	48	51	40	31	36	34
Rapid communications	—	5	5	7	3	6
Case reports	252	247	212	211	149	165
Editorials/reviews	38	38	53	81	57	56
Review series	18	31	26	13	19	14
Supplement articles	16	41	29	17	16	46
Case report commentaries	7	11	7	7	0	0
Letters	N/A	50	55	72	79	96
Total	872	889	838	837	812	922

Table 2 Geographical distribution of submissions

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
UK	291	320	303	265	326	348
Western Europe	266	264	236	242	230	268
Spain	46	42	45	44	37	38
The Netherlands	51	44	49	41	40	51
Italy	38	48	19	38	40	36
France	27	28	24	27	26	34
Turkey	13	14	22	20	17	27
Israel	20	17	15	10	13	8
Eire	10	8	7	5	2	5
Switzerland	10	13	9	5	5	9
Germany	16	26	23	20	29	31
Belgium	17	12	11	10	10	5
Greece	7	7	6	15	6	12
Austria	7	5	5	3	4	10
Portugal	3	0	0	2	0	0
Malta	1	0	0	2	1	1
Andorra	0	0	0	0	0	1
USA and Canada	101	71	84	76	81	87
Japan	65	53	64	46	54	56
Australasia	38	31	60	48	38	60
Scandinavia	36	32	39	36	38	41
Asia	34	26	26	35	30	39
Eastern Europe	7	10	3	6	4	9
South America	14	10	3	3	1	5
Africa	7	4	4	3	3	4
Middle East	13	5	9	5	7	5

Table 3 Decision of papers submitted 1999/2000 as at 30 September 2000

	Case reports	Papers	Short papers
Total	165	505	34
Rejected	133 (81%)	302 (60%)	25 (73%)
Accepted	3 (2%)	62 (12%)	5 (15%)
Pending	29 (17%)	139 (27.5%)	4 (12%)
Withdrawn		2 (0.5%)	

Table 4 Median time to first decision (days)

	1995/6	1996/7	1997/8	1998/9	1999/2000
Full papers	74	44.5	56	48.5	56
Short papers	82	38	24	11.5	28

necessarily good measures of journal quality,² this observation indicates that impact factors do say something about the standard of the journal, at least as perceived by those who submit original research.

As in all our years as editors,³⁻⁶ we have this year pursued a highly selective policy on paper acceptance, and this year's figures indicate that we are accepting about 20–25% of papers submitted to the journal (table 3). In the light of the increasing numbers submitted to the journal, this proportion is likely to fall in coming years. Our median time taken to reach a decision on full papers remains at 7–8 weeks, and four weeks for short papers (table 4). This year we have also continued with the definitive review series on rare diseases⁷ and have started a new series on the paediatric origins of adult lung disease.⁸

During this year, as ever, we have been helped enormously by the associate editors, the advisory board, editorial assistants, and by our managers at BMJ Publications. Special thanks are due to Robert Winter, who for many years has edited the case reports in the journal in addition to a share of original research papers; we thank him for his tireless work and invariably thoughtful and perceptive advice. Rachel Orme, one of our editorial assistants for the last three years, also leaves us this year and we wish her well for the future. Our journal is as ever heavily dependent on the goodwill and hard work of our reviewers, and to them we express our thanks; their names are listed on page 1072. Our ultimate thanks go, however, to the people who send us papers since it is they who ultimately determine the quality and interest of the journal. Please continue to send us your best work.

J BRITTON
A J KNOX
Executive Editors

- 1 Britton J, Knox A. Journal Impact Factors for 1999. *Thorax* 2000;55:725.
- 2 Seglen PO. Why the impact factor of journals should not be used for evaluating research. *BMJ* 1997;314:497.
- 3 Britton JR, Knox AJ. Annual report October 1995 to September 1996. *Thorax* 1996;51:1177.
- 4 Knox AJ, Britton J. Annual report October 1996 to September 1997. *Thorax* 1997;52:1023.
- 5 Knox AJ, Britton J. Rising impact, fast review: Annual report October 1997 to September 1998. *Thorax* 1999;54:5–6.
- 6 Britton J, Knox AJ, Orme RLJ, et al. Annual report October 1998 to September 1999. *Thorax* 2000;55:2–3.
- 7 Tattersfield AE, du Bois RM. Rare diseases: introduction. *Thorax* 1999;54:253.
- 8 Sly PD. Paediatric origins of adult lung disease: introduction. *Thorax* 2000;55:585–6.