

From the Editor's desk

By Peter Tyrer

A good read

This is my last 'From the Editor's Desk' and so thought it would be a good opportunity to give you a frank report about my aims and performance as editor over the past 10 years. When I became Editor in July 2003 I set myself a set of eight targets; I wanted the *Journal* 'to be both topical and learned, to have both immediate and long-term impact, to appeal equally to the busy clinician and the earnest researcher, and to be both serious and entertaining.'¹ It is for others to decide whether I have succeeded or not, but we do have one set of (not entirely satisfactory) metrics that aids this a little. Topicality and immediate impact are measured by the immediacy factor – the number of times an article is cited in the year of its publication. Our 2012 immediacy factor is 1.87, a rise of 71% since 2003, so here we are hitting home. Measures of learnedness are much more difficult, but the impact factor – the citation rate in the 2 years after publication – still holds sway, and our current impact factor of 6.61 has risen 60% in the same period. But the long-term impact is perhaps even more important. The 5-year impact factor was introduced in 2007 and ours has increased by 17% since then, and the *Journal's* cited half-life, the median age of items cited in the relevant year, has increased by 53% in the past 10 years, and is now higher than almost every other psychiatric journal. Appeal is much more difficult to measure, and the statistics I have just given you will leave some readers critically looking at each other like one of James Thurber's rapacious women complaining to another about her husband in a cartoon, 'He doesn't know anything except facts'. The busy clinician has become even busier, and probably more distractible, in the past 10 years as even more facts have to be extracted from them by demanding services,² but at least in 2004 they were reading the *Journal* fairly often,³ and I hope they still are. I also think researchers are getting to like the *Journal* better, although as I have to reject more than 6 times the papers that I accept, I get a somewhat biased post-bag. But at least the threats I receive are getting nicer, and sometimes I get messages of unadulterated ecstasy when I accept a paper. I have tried very hard to maintain a high standard of science, and although doubtless some will feel I have failed at times, the colleagues I rely on to 'tell me like it really is' have reinforced this view.

So where is the *Journal* going now? Of course this is up to the new Editor, not yet known at the time of writing, but if I had to hazard a guess I suspect that the following will feature even more prominently in our pages: neurocognition in all its aspects (Joyce, pp. 161–162; Choi *et al*, pp. 172–178);^{4,5} public mental health in both national and international contexts (Kohrt, pp. 165–167; Betancourt *et al*, pp. 196–202; Chen *et al*, pp. 203–208);^{6,7} as well as much more understanding and cost-effective treatment of common mental and personality disorders (Bateman & Fonagy, pp. 221–227; Moran & Crawford, pp. 163–164).^{8–10} But of course those who had read my first editorial would expect this. I wrote then that 'I do not want the subjects in which I am especially interested as a researcher – personality disorder and risk,

classification and treatment of common mental disorders, trials of complex interventions and public mental health – to be unfairly represented in accepted publications',¹ and although I have said repeatedly to myself that I am lacking in any form of bias, I have to admit, as I did last month, that the Editor's prejudice is, and probably always will be, final.¹¹ I leave the heading of this piece to the end; I am sorry, but the *Journal* is still not a good read. There are lighter touches, as the extras editors have valiantly attempted to introduce, but the bulk of the journal is still not something to take to bed with you, even though some may read it in their baths.¹² I have not succeeded in making the *Journal* both serious and entertaining; I hope the new Editor will do better.

A parting glass

I also said in my first editorial that a good editor has no friends.¹ This is why, and it adds some sympathy and solace for my enemies.

The Editor
No friends has he
Only supplicants
With fantastic offerings
Too good to turn away
But stony hearted he must judge
No favours shown, all kindness shunned
Dissected content disembodied from its source
Equal scrutiny for merit, pertinence and blunder
If thumbs go down, or what seems new is old
The goodbye message is composed
And here is where kindness can intrude
As refusal like an uppercut
Can bring resolve crashing to the floor
All desire to publish gone
So softly, softly, guides the pen
To find another pathway past despond
To rise again another day
But plus and minus still equals nought
And those who cajole or flatter must remain
Only supplicants
No friends has he
The Editor

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- 11 Tyrer P. From the Editor's Desk. *Br J Psychiatry* 2013; **203**: 160.
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