

ANESTHESIOLOGY and the Japanese Society of Anesthesiologists

The Science Is Amazing

THE science is amazing, the hosts are very gracious, and the food is incredible!" This was the response one of us (J.C.E.) received over dinner from a well-known anesthesiologist and scientist from Duke University, Durham, North Carolina, when asked what got into his head to fly all the way from the East Coast of the United States to Japan for a 5-day visit. Similar comments, emphasizing the same three reasons and usually in the same order, have been expressed from more than a dozen gifted American investigators in the past few years. Not surprisingly, most of these individuals have close collaborative ties with Japanese investigators, sharing students, and fellows and in obtaining joint research funding. The research laboratory of Dr. Eisenach, for example, includes a faculty member who is a Japanese citizen, two Japanese fellows (one an anesthesiologist and the other a Ph.D. scientist), and the laboratory collaborates actively with Hideaki Obata, M.D., from Gunma University Graduate School of Medicine, Maebashi, Gunma, Japan.

But why is ANESTHESIOLOGY, the journal of the American Society of Anesthesiologists (ASA), involved in a research session at the Annual Meeting of the Japanese Society of Anesthesiologists (JSA)? Simply because it meets the mission of the journal to advance the science and clinical care of our specialty by promoting new discovery. We can only publish work that is submitted to us, and we compete in a large and diverse pool of clinical and laboratory science journals. According to focus group discussions we recently conducted, our authors look for the prestige of the journal, the fairness and speed of the review process, and the audience they intend to reach. This understanding of authors' needs and desires led to an evaluation of our peer review process and reader preferences, resulting in large changes in both the peer review process and the structure of the print and online journal.^{1,2}

Journal involvement in scientific meetings is good for the journal in that it may recruit good original research, presented in an abstract form at the meeting, which might otherwise have been submitted to other journals. Such recruitment has been remarkably successful for ANESTHESIOLOGY, and the April 2009 and 2010 issues are nearly completely

filled with original research, review material, and plenary lecture articles from journal-sponsored sessions at the Annual Meeting of the ASA. Many of these articles are already highly cited and have significantly influenced clinical practice and fundamental research.

Journal involvement in scientific meetings can also be good for the meetings themselves because they bring together international experts on important clinical topics while at the same time highlighting current research on those topics presented at the meeting. Audience attendance and participation at recent journal-sponsored sessions at the ASA have been outstanding, reflecting the importance of the topics and the amount of active research in the areas chosen. Topics are highlighted which are important to clinicians and scientists, including recent journal-sponsored sessions on anesthesia and the developing brain, the role of simulation in education, obstructive sleep apnea, and biomarkers in anesthesiology. The topic of the journal-sponsored session at this year's JSA and ASA meetings, "Outcomes Beyond the OR," is essential to the growth of our specialty in the medical community and is further discussed in the Special Announcement by Sessler and Ozaki in this issue.³ We anticipate that a large part of the April 2011 issue of the journal will be devoted to this broad and central topic to the vigor or research in our specialty.

But why the JSA? From the journal's perspective, we already receive a large number of high-quality submissions and publish a large number of articles from Japanese research in perioperative, critical care, and pain medicine. Despite a relative shortage of physicians and considerable shortage of anesthesiologists in many areas of Japan, research productivity remains high in quality.

JSA has a membership of more than 10,000. Qualified anesthesiologists account for 7,000 in JSA, and their spheres of activity include anesthetic management (70%), pain medicine (15%), intensive care (10%), and emergency medicine (3%). Recently, palliative medicine has also become an important field that quite a few anesthesiologists are involved in. The Annual Meeting of JSA this year received submission of 1,320 free abstracts and has accepted 1,002 abstracts. They consist of clinical and laboratory investigations, with a small number of case reports accepted. Twenty-six symposia will be held in the meeting. As one of them, the JSA-ANESTHESIOLOGY Symposium invited ap-

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plications from JSA members, and four abstracts have been selected for presentation.³ ANESTHESIOLOGY is one of the most important journals in which JSA members are eager to publish their original research. Thus, this symposium will stimulate the research mind of JSA members and lead to more scientific submissions to ANESTHESIOLOGY. This effect is favorable for JSA, because it intensifies the academic activity of the members.

JSA publishes the *Journal of Anesthesia* bimonthly. Because an impact factor is expected to be assigned this year, the number of submissions is increasing rapidly, resulting in a decrease in the acceptance rate below 40%. As the *Journal of Anesthesia* grows, we can learn much from the strategy of ANESTHESIOLOGY to increase its scientific stature to become one of the major journals in our specialty. Thus, this symposium is profitable to JSA also from this viewpoint.

ANESTHESIOLOGY plans to continue to participate in important international meetings of anesthesiologists, such as the ASA and the JSA, relying largely on voluntary contribu-

tions of time of members of our Editorial and Associate Editorial Board members. We hope that you will agree, whether you attend these sessions or read the synopses of the abstracts³ or the full-length articles, that the science is truly amazing.

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