EDITORIAL

Age and Ageing: updated style, new directions

Welcome to the new-look *Age and Ageing*. The intention has been to produce an eye-catching cover, which will encourage both established readers and those not yet familiar with the journal to pick it up and enjoy reading it. The changes in livery, lettering and layout reflect the fact that *Age and Ageing* is an authoritative, stimulating and lively international journal which is both educational and enjoyable. Much thought has gone into the design of the new cover; please write and tell us what you think about it.

Inside, the style of the pages has been updated to give a fresher, more readable appearance. The provenance of the authors now appears on the title page, together with fax numbers and e-mail addresses. Summaries have been replaced by structured abstracts. This will help those browsing through the journal to determine whether they wish to proceed to the body of an individual paper. It will also help researchers who are keeping databases of randomized controlled trials and meta-analyses to identify such studies easily. The Key points at the end of the article should help underline the main messages of the paper. The Instructions to authors have been re-written to reflect these style changes.

There have also been some less obvious changes. Nearly all papers (whether original research articles or reviews) are now sent to three referees. As a general rule, one referee is a specialist in the field, another has a more general interest and a third is from another country. Wherever possible, the large numbers of papers which we now receive from outside the UK are reviewed by an expert from the same country as the authors. The papers are anonymized and the referees' comments are sent anonymously to the authors, as well as to the other referees. This innovation has been well received: authors have been able to improve their papers, and the referees have found other colleagues' assessments interesting and informative. I would like to formally thank all those who so generously give their time to reviewing manuscripts and who return their reports so promptly. If you would like to become a referee for the journal, or know of other people with a particular expertise in some aspect of ageing, please write to me with details. We are also asking authors to suggest names and addresses of two or three potential reviewers when they submit their papers.

We now send manuscripts to an independent statistician whenever this is requested by any of the referees. The aim is to ensure that the already high scientific quality of articles in the journal continues to rise.

The main body of the journal will continue to be original research on any aspect of ageing that is of interest to gerontologists, geriatricians and all who are involved in normal ageing and the challenges and problems experienced by older people and those who care for them. Papers with negative results will be published as long as they are of a high standard. We are particularly interested in publishing the results of randomized, controlled trials. The editorial board has decided that *Age and Ageing* should no longer publish results of animal research; more specialist journals are more appropriate for this type of work. However, leading articles and review articles will discuss pertinent topics involving animal studies.

Where do we go from here? Currently there is little variety in the type of articles published. As review articles are read and cited more often than original articles, short leading articles (600-800 word commentaries) and longer review articles (about 2,000 words) are especially welcome. These too will be sent to three independent reviewers. Our plans to expand the number of leaders and reviews will be further elaborated in a future editorial.

Other sections for which contributions would be welcome include Teaching point (with illustrations wherever possible), Specialist view (where non-geriatricians look at an aspect of ageing from their perspective); Case reports (illustrating an important principle or practice point); Letter from... (news, ideas, perspectives from different countries); and Questions and answers (your queries and conundrums will be sent to experts for advice and comment). The Thesis section will encourage those who have completed their masters' degrees or doctorates to present their main findings and reflect on their research in a succinct form for a general readership. Advances in biological gerontology are of particular interest and commentaries, as well as pertinent original articles will be welcomed. Also planned is a Diogenes section, which will highlight items on ageing which have been reported in journals, discussion groups or in the media generally.

The main criteria for publication are relevance and originality: we wish to present work that will improve understanding or practice.
Editorial

A lively journal should have a spirited correspondence column. At present, most letters are comments on and criticisms of original articles which have recently appeared in the journal. It would make for a more interesting Letters to the Editor section to include news and views, wit and wisdom. Do write if you have anything important, interesting or provocative to say. Authors whose papers are not quite substantial enough to be published as an original article are now being invited to submit their work as a letter.

Although the Books received page has been discontinued, the Book review section continues to flourish. The Book reviews editor, Jeremy Playfer, is always delighted to receive new titles on ageing and age-related subjects for consideration. He would also like to hear from people who might be interested in writing critiques of such books. Being a book reviewer ensures that you keep abreast of your field. The book you review is also yours to keep.

Book review correspondence should be addressed to:

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Finally, the journal should entertain as well as inform. Each issue will contain photographs of older people and age-related topics. Many pictures will be from professionals who specialize in this field but all photographs submitted will be considered for publication. Short pieces of prose or poetry are also welcome as 'fillers', as are aphorisms and anecdotes.

Once these changes have taken place, there will be a readership survey to ensure that the journal is meeting your requirements.

Previous editors of Age and Ageing have progressively heightened the status and improved the quality of the journal. I would particularly like to salute the excellent work done by my predecessor, Professor Grimley Evans, in strengthening the scientific standing of the journal. Under his tutelage, Age and Ageing has become a journal of international stature and in terms of citation ranking is now in the top four 'ageing' journals in the world.

It is my hope that the introduction of these changes will encourage more people to contribute to the journal, to read and learn from it, and to be entertained and enlightened by it. I would like our journal to be the very best specialist publication journal on ageing. I look forward to hearing from you.

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