

taken months on a desk calculator can now be performed in a few seconds of computer time. Being able to apply statistics rapidly and easily has resulted in more sophisticated reports of studies and, therefore, readers have become more acquainted with at least their inclusion in the articles they read. The same ease in computation sometimes leads authors to apply statistical programs inappropriately. How do readers assess appropriateness of statistical methods? One answer is that they rely on the journal reviewers of scientific articles to make the assessment. Another is that they learn to evaluate the appropriateness to a certain degree on their own. I often hear someone say that he or she skips over the results section of a paper, and particularly the tables of data, to read only the discussion section. Using this "bottom line" method of reading is somewhat like taking a medication without reading the instructions on the label.

The more authors educate readers regarding their statistical approaches, the better the reader can evaluate the importance and relevance of the authors' results. On the other hand, authors err in making tables and presentations of data "too statistical" when the data could be presented clearly, simply, and without the use of technical jargon. Rather than either impressing or intimidating the readers, it can simply turn them off to the findings—which is clearly not the objective of the author.

Journals might also consider occasional articles that deal primarily with the use of fundamental statistics, replete with clinical examples of a practical nature, rather than examples calculated in bushels of wheat or comparison of teaching methods with grade school children, as found in most statistical texts. Journals could also occasionally devote an issue to clinical research design and statistics. Such an issue could serve as a future reference for readers and authors alike.

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The Shoulder Bag

For the past four years, a lanky gentleman has traveled the world carrying a very heavy shoulder bag. This spartan traveler had but few clothes in that bag. Rather it was laden with manuscripts to be reviewed, manuscripts submitted to *Diabetologia*. And the bag belonged to the peripatetic editor of that journal, one Kurt

George M. M. Alberti, late of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, England. Wherever he went, George Alberti carried his heavy bag with him, stealing moments in hotel rooms, airports, and the like to take pen in hand and quite literally edit manuscripts. For George is a master of the King's English, and, by golly, during his tenure as editor, *Diabetologia* would reflect the beauty of our language. It is a difficult enough task to judge manuscripts for their scientific value and to broker disputes between authors and reviewers, yet George bit off even more. In the U.S.A. we call it copyediting, and have a cadre of professionals who relieve editors of the task. In Britain, the title is subeditor or language supervisor. Although some journals have professional staff to subedit, others hire freelance subeditors, who occasionally are physicians. George himself did most of the subediting of *Diabetologia*, and the quality of language in that journal has shined.

Under the tenure of George Alberti as editor, *Diabetologia* took giant leaps forward. The journal went from 6 to 12 issues per year. Number of articles submitted more than doubled. Quality of contributions skyrocketed. George Alberti brought to *Diabetologia* the unique blend of basic scientific rigor and clinical insight that has permitted it to flourish. His term has now been completed, the journal is healthy, and he has passed the editorial baton to Andrew Cudworth of London.

George Alberti's life was so involved with *Diabetologia* these last four years that many of us wonder what he will do with his newfound time. We are fortunate to have him spend an all too brief sabbatical on this side of the Atlantic. But after only four months in Nashville, he and family will head back to Newcastle. There, it is hard to imagine that he will be even more productive scientifically than he has already been. Yet there should be more time available to devote to research fellows and colleagues. More importantly, he should have more time for family as well. There is no doubt, too, that George will soon take on some other major task, which will once more fill that now empty shoulder bag.

Meanwhile, the European Association for the Study of Diabetes, for whom *Diabetologia* is published, have discovered that their costs of running an editorial office have markedly increased. Some have wanted to attribute this to higher rental costs in London than in Newcastle. I suspect, however, that they did not realize that the editorial offices of *Diabetologia* these past four years were contained in a very heavy shoulder bag.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The "Festschrift for Rachmiel Levine," which appeared in the January/February issue of *Diabetes Care*, was sponsored by the Diabetes Program of Eisenhower Medical Center (Rancho Mirage, California). Support for the publication of the "Festschrift" was provided by the Kroc Foundation, Monoject Division of Sherwood Medical, and The Upjohn Company, as well as the Diabetes Program of Eisenhower Medical Center.