Editorial: More Changes for the Schizophrenia Bulletin

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Stewardship of Schizophrenia Bulletin by Oxford University Press (OUP) and Maryland Psychiatric Research Center commenced with the January 2005 issue. We got off to a good start with a lead article presenting the MATRICS consensus statement on clinical trial design to win Food and Drug Administration approval of an efficacy claim for cognition as an indication in schizophrenia. We also embraced some wonderful Bulletin traditions including the First-Person Account, cover artwork from persons with schizophrenia, At Issue pieces for controversial reports and novel hypotheses, and the emphasis on presenting collections of invited manuscripts focused on a single theme. We also have followed the NIMH tradition and kept cost low for individual subscribers. In subsequent issues, we began publishing short features on genetic and environmental risk factors and translational concepts from basic and clinical neuroscience. Most recently, we began publishing the Cochrane Corner, a brief synopsis of a full Cochrane Library review emphasizing implications for research and clinical care. The Bulletin has also maintained its commitment to publishing abstracts from international symposia including the International Congress on Schizophrenia Research and full articles in a supplement from the International Symposium on Schizophrenia, Bern.

The past year brought encouraging news regarding the future of the Bulletin and its growing prominence in reporting the latest research findings in our field. We were particularly gratified to learn that the 2006 impact factor rating released by the Institute of Scientific Information (ISI) in June of 2007 had increased by 52%, up to 4.35 from 2.87 in the previous year. This rating, which reflects citations to articles published between 2004 and 2005, moved Schizophrenia Bulletin from 30th to 13th overall among the 95 psychiatric journals recognized by ISI and 8th in social science journal citations.

Recognizing the growing importance and influence of digital publishing, Schizophrenia Bulletin formed a relationship with the Schizophrenia Research Forum, a web-based scientific community dedicated to sharing ideas on all aspects of research related to schizophrenia. Periodically, the Bulletin flags a manuscript for special attention, making it available through the Forum’s Web site (http://www.schizophreniaforum.org) in advance of publication in the journal. The most recent example can be found on line at the Bulletin or SRF website as Cohen and colleagues challenge the view that persons with schizophrenia have a more benign course in developing countries. Schizophrenia Bulletin has also become an official journal of the Schizophrenia International Research Society and encourages interested professionals to join and participate in Society activities including the Venice conference in June (see announcement, this issue).

In 2007, we moved from 4 to 6 issues per year and now have additional space for original reports to join themes, reviews, workshop reports, and special features. Some original reports relate to themes, but this is not a requirement, and most stand on their own. One of our most important goals has been to increase manuscript throughput by reducing the time between submission and decision. We have endeavored to publish each issue for on time delivery and have been gratified by the responsiveness of authors, reviewers, and guest editors, alike. During the past year, original manuscripts have averaged 13 days per reviewer, 25 days from submission to first decision letter, and 24 days from resubmission to final decision. This could not have been possible without implementing an on-line manuscript submission and review system, and we recognize that this has occasionally placed an additional burden on our authors, referees, and editors. We greatly appreciate your patience as the editorial office continues to refine and optimize the manuscript submission and peer-review process.

With the start of the new year, we are instituting several changes in our Editorial Board. There are so many exceptional people diligently working on behalf of the Bulletin, that we must begin rotating membership annually in order to spread the burden and recognize those individuals who shoulder the bulk of the work for the journal. The masthead for this issue lists the new group, and we have expressed gratitude to those rotating off the Board this year. Key changes also involve the Associate Editors, and we have added Lisa Dixon, Philip Harvey, and Dan Javitt. Of special note is the role of 2 of my MPRC colleagues who have worked hard and creatively as we assumed editorial responsibility for the Bulletin.
Paul Shepard has been attentive to the many information-processing issues we face and has been a critical link with OUP and with Manuscript Central. He also oversees the neuroscience themes and shares responsibility for the Schizophrenia in Translation features with Tom McGlashan. Gunvant Thaker has worked closely with Paul, our Managing Editor Janet Smith, our publisher Shelley Andrews, and me on every aspect of the Bulletin. He manages the cover artwork and First-Person Accounts and is the assigned editor on many of the manuscripts that are submitted for our consideration. With this issue, we are announcing the creation of the new position of Deputy Editor and the appointment of Dr Thaker to this role. All of us are cognizant of the special significance of this appointment as we remember with sadness that Wayne Fenton was the last Deputy Editor of Schizophrenia Bulletin.

The year 2007 had a bittersweet memory. The September issue, published 1 year after the death of Wayne Fenton, contained a theme taking substantive note of the progress in schizophrenia knowledge that resulted from Wayne’s leadership. We continue to recognize his devotion to his patients and the exceptional clinical care he provided, through the Wayne Fenton Award for Clinical Excellence. Application guidelines will be published annually in the second issue of the Bulletin (most recently, volume 33 of 2007) and are also available on our Web site (http://www.oxfordjournals.org/schbul/fenton_award.html). Last year, we recognized another extraordinary contributor to the field by presenting the first Wayne Fenton Award posthumously to Professor Jerry Hogarty. A manuscript detailing the 4 novel therapeutic advances initiated by Jerry was published in the September 2007 issue.

We are pleased with the feedback from the field and with the help that so many have provided.

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