Three years have passed since I penned my first editorial in this very journal. I am happy and honored that the members of the Indian Pharmacological Society (IPS) have reiterated their faith in me by re-electing me unanimously for another term. In my first editorial I had promised to do my best to improve the journal. I think this is the right time for me to introspect and share with you our achievements, failures and future plans.

We managed to release all the 18 issues in the last three years on time, dispatching the journals to all members and subscribers in the first week of the publication month. The number of new subscriptions increased considerably and reached 300 in the last year. The financial position also improved to enable us to have more manpower and equipment. The IJP office was provided with 24-hour broadband Internet connection and the computers in the IJP office were networked, thanks to the administration at JIPMER.

New sections such as ‘Web-wise’ and ‘Molecules of the millennium’ were added and the editorial became a regular feature. These additions became instantly popular and more widely read. An Ombudsman was instituted to resolve any dispute between the editorial team and the contributors/readers. This was the first time that such a redressal mechanism was put into place in the IJP. The report of the Ombudsman for the last three years is given on page 7. We also conducted an active drive for the recruitment of peer reviewers for the journal. Now we have about 200 reviewers helping us in processing the manuscripts.

The website of the journal was shifted to a new server and was given a new look. All full articles from the very first issue of the IJP to the current one are available free on the website. The IJP now has a considerable web presence as evidenced by the fact that a Google search using a pharmacological term invariably lists links to IJP articles. The current issues are published at least one week before the release of the print issues. The Table of Contents (ToC) is sent out by email to more than 400 readers who have subscribed to the service. The number of visitors browsing our website has been steadily increasing over the last two years and has now touched 247 per day from more than 100 countries.

The IJP CD continues to be updated every year. The IJP CD 2003 which is currently available contains full articles in the PDF format from 1969-2003. The user-friendly interface is very versatile in searching and locating the desired articles. The price of this CD has been heavily subsidized for members of the IPS.

The IJP, as promised, was proactive and took steps to educate members on issues related to publication practices. During the 35th Annual Conference of the IPS at Gwalior, lectures on “Peer Review” and “Plagiarism” were given by the editors of IJP. We conducted a one-day pre-conference workshop on “Elementary Biomedical Statistics for Pharmacologists” under the aegis of the IPS during the Southern Regional Conference held at Tirupathi in September 2003. The workshop was aimed at imparting theoretical and practical knowledge of statistics using computer software. A similar but a shorter version of the workshop was held during the 36th Annual Conference of the IPS in New Delhi in December 2003. In the same conference, we also conducted a panel discussion on “Publication Ethics”. My sincere thanks to the organizing secretaries of these conferences for heeding my requests and allowing us to conduct these programs. The IJP also set up a stall in the last two annual conferences to register complaints and the change of address of the members. The stall also sold IJP CDs and made efforts to promote the journal.

I, as the Chief Editor of IJP, was successful in receiving the InterNICHE Human Education Award for 2003 for distributing a CD containing computer assisted learning (CAL) software for teaching animal experiments in pharmacology. This CD was distributed along with the December 2003 issue of IJP. I am sure many of those who received the CD would have realized the potential of this CD for teaching and learning purposes.

Our efforts to get the journal indexed by the Index Medicus failed. Enough has been written about it earlier and I will not dwell on this matter further.

One of the perennial problems we have been experiencing is that of missing issues. The postal service in a few parts of the country leaves a lot to be desired. Further, the postal rates have been hiked and we now pay at least Rs. 19/- for posting each issue. The private couriers are no better. The major players do not operate in many small towns and their charges are exorbitant. The small companies have tie-ups with local courier services in neighboring and distant states but their service is worse than that of the postal department in many states. Hence, many issues do not reach the members.

Matters relating to the increased cost of printing and the current practice of free supply of journal issues to the members were discussed elaborately in the Executive Committee meeting and subsequently in the General Body meeting at New Delhi. It has been decided to give an option to the members to receive either a CD journal or a print journal (more details and the option form are available elsewhere in this issue).

You are holding an IJP issue which is completely redesigned to improve the get-up. From the year 2004 onwards Medknow Publications, Mumbai will publish the IJP. The ownership and the editorial control will remain as such.

We have set up an online Manuscript Management System (MMS) which facilitates the online submission of articles and
tracking of manuscripts. It also helps the IJP office in administering manuscripts. We have been testing the system for a few months and it is being fully implemented from 2004. The journal website (www.ijp-online.com) will be redesigned and integrated with the MMS.

Currently, two awards are given for the papers published in the IJP. The NN Dutta/Jaipur award is given to the best research paper published in the IJP every year and the BP Mukherjee prize is given for the best paper published in the IJP in the area of indigenous drugs. We are seriously considering cash awards for these prizes to encourage contributors to submit their best work.

We are also planning to bring out more CDs to be issued free with the journal and to continue conducting hands-on training programs and workshops for young pharmacologists at the annual and regional conferences.

I take this opportunity to thank the contributors, editors, reviewers, readers and others who have extended their sincere help in running the journal and hope they will continue to do so in the years to come.

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