The Form and Substance of Science in Our Journal: With Gratitude to the Guardians

With this issue of The Journal of Nuclear Medicine, we introduce some changes that will be apparent to the reader. After discussion with and approval of the Publications Committee, the Journal joins over 250 international journals that adhere to the uniform requirements for manuscripts submitted to biomedical journals by the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors. Authors are encouraged to obtain copies of the international requirements (Ann Intern Med 1982; 96:766–770) and to follow them in preparing manuscripts in the future. During the next year’s “grace period,” manuscripts will not be returned for stylist changes prior to being sent out for review; however, after Dec 31, 1987, manuscripts not prepared according to international style requirements will be returned for format revision.

Because the style of Journal presentation provides the common framework for publication, we will publish in 1987 a new combined Journal of Nuclear Medicine and Journal of Nuclear Medicine Technology style manual. This manual will facilitate joint efforts in publishing the Society’s two journals. As this style manual will be relatively brief, authors are encouraged to consult other sources, particularly the CBE Style Manual, 5th edition, 1983 (published by the Council of Biology Editors, Inc.) for helpful suggestions and recommendations in preparation of manuscripts and other aspects of putting words into print. JNM/JNMT Author Guidelines will appear in February.

I am pleased to present in this issue the first Continuing Education article published under the Associate Editorship of Dr. Leon Partain (Sandler et al. J Nucl Med 1987; 28:122–129). This series is based on the popular Continuing Education sessions offered at our Annual Meeting, and will provide readers with a permanent record of these timely reviews. Although a good speech does not always make a good journal article without considerable effort, I encourage those speakers approached by Dr. Partain to publish their education presentations in the Journal and thus to reach a wide audience.

Dissemination of information is the ultimate goal of publishing, and it carries with it a tremendous responsibility. In the Letters to the Editor will be found a notice relating to a charge of research fraud at a prestigious US university medical center. The correspondence represents the report of an Ad Hoc Committee concerning articles published in the Journal. Charges of falsification of data in publications of a faculty member were investigated to ascertain the validity of the research, as could best be determined. Of four articles by this researcher in the Journal, three had no reason found to doubt validity, and one was classified as questionable (unsupported by verifiable, original experiments and analysis).

This is not the first incident in the research community involving such charges, but these cases still shock us and should prompt us to examine our own consciences to ensure that we are upholding the high standards of our calling. Cases of alleged fabrication of research data are rare, but there are many minor frauds that each of us may perpetrate if we are not on guard. Chief among these is the acceptance of authorship on articles in which our contribution is undeserving. Another is publication of fragmented reports and multiple reports of the same data as original contributions, and failing to report data that do not support a hypothesis.

Each of us is called to bear witness to what we have learned by our observations and thoughts in as accurate and as forthright a manner as possible. So far as the Journal is concerned, the editors, editorial board, and reviewers depend on the integrity of authors to adhere strictly to the truth, and we endeavor to assist authors in the careful presentation of their findings while adhering to the highest possible standards. We are fortunate to have so many dedicated and critical associate and assistant editors, editorial board members, and reviewers willing to give of their time to the benefit of authors and readers. It is my pleasure once again to recognize the reviewers who have contributed to the work of the Journal during the past year. Thank you all for a job well done!

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Editor