

## To Publish, Publish, and Publish Again

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In these pages I have written previously of the underlying philosophy of our Association and the means by which it fosters and advances aerospace medicine across its many constituent groups and professions. I have also said something about the mechanics by which the services we provide to members and the wider community are delivered by the elected leadership and the Home Office Staff.

In February I wrote about the vital work carried by the Scientific Programming Committee (SPC) to review all the abstracts submitted for consideration to be presented at the forthcoming annual scientific meeting. Much of that committee's work is now done for this year, although the leadership of the SPC remain very busy right up to and through the annual meeting. I would like to thank all of them and now highlight another function in our overall mission.

Staying on the theme of the academic processes of the Association and, given you are reading the journal, it might be appropriate to continue right here. Our journal Editor Dr. Fred Bonato and his assistant Mrs. Debra Sventek have the task of developing the content and then the Managing Editor Pam Day and her colleague Rachel Trigg take over to produce the journal you see online or hold in your hand. Its pages are varied and range from cutting edge research to news and views. A privilege of being President is that one's views can be aired in these pages. However there are opportunities for you to get published within the journal's pages and instructions on submissions are contained on the inside back cover of each edition. In addition, there are regular panels at our meetings in which the process of preparing and assessing publications are set out to assist authors, established and new, prepare their work for submission, and to understand the processes that will be followed when it arrives.

It is worth knowing that after the Editor has had a look at all submissions, to check they fall within the overall scope of the journal and our Association, the paper is sent to members of our review panel. Reviewers are generally experienced authors and have a substantial amount of experience in preparing and assessing papers for possible publication. Reviewers are chosen according to their known interests and expertise so that the papers are seen by someone with pertinent specialist knowledge.

Reviewing papers can be an interesting and challenging process but it is also very educational. When you are "on the other side," judging the science and its description, you see clearly some of the flaws you yourself should avoid. It is a privileged position to get first sight of what may be a new area of work which probably is within the area of your own professional background. Expressing a written objective opinion can crystallize your thoughts. Although reviewer comments are anonymized to authors, you do not want to discourage those whose work one feels needs substantial revision or even rejection. However, you also have a

responsibility to the readership to select or improve what is to be published within the pages of our journal. A reviewer often improves the text or tables by highlighting changes that will make comprehension easier for the reader. If you feel you would like to get involved in this process then do let our Editor know your areas of expertise and contact details.

A step further on from being a reviewer is to be appointed to the journal's Editorial Board. This group helps provide the Editor and the leadership of the Association with feedback and opinion on all matters related to the journal. In recent times it has discussed the change in the journal title and its cover artwork, as well as the nature of the material printed on its pages. This allows a broad representation of the community we serve to express views on the balance and direction of the journal. Members have generally been approached and invited by the Editor, who will have an overview of the skills and professional scope of individuals and their interests, to join the Board. There the Editor can harness this expertise and experience to provide him or her with a spectrum of views on themes and developments such as Open Access publishing and appropriate topics for our publication.

We changed the name of the journal 2 years ago to more closely reflect the business of the Association and with that there was a significant presentational re-launch. It takes time for the occasional reader to catch up and perhaps all of us can help by suggesting colleagues think of *Aerospace Medicine and Human Performance* (AMHP) as their first choice for publication. Too often a paper appears in other parts of the medical and scientific literature that is clearly within the scope of AMHP but was never submitted. We can change that by encouraging collaborators to submit papers to our journal, where the readership is the most knowledgeable on aeromedical matters. So readers and AsMA members can all play a part in spreading the view that our journal is the right place to have published work that is core to our business.

At each annual scientific meeting the journal staff have a stand where they are delighted to see old friends and new faces. As I know you will ALL be coming to Denver (30 April – 4 May), do stop by to chat with those who put the journal together and see what you can do to get more involved. It helps the quality of our publication and is an invaluable educational exercise in itself for you.



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