



Editorial

On the Common Growth of the European Association of Urology Annual Meeting and of European Urology, “Your” Platinum Journal

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In the present issue of European Urology, the interesting article by Autorino et al [1] reports on the abstracts presented at the 2000 and 2001 annual meetings of the European Association of Urology (EAU) which were published as full length articles in peer-reviewed journals over the subsequent 5-year period.

The authors correctly state that the publication of an abstract as a full length article is the natural outcome of the research cycle and that the rate of publication may be regarded as an indirect indicator of the scientific quality of the meeting [2]. The authors are also right in stating that failure to publish data originally presented as an abstract is deleterious because the contributions which never appear as full length articles are to be considered “lost information” [3]. In addition, more and more frequently highly ranked scientific journals do not accept abstracts presented at meetings as references included in manuscripts submitted for publication; this has recently become the policy of European Urology as well.

Overall, 47.3% of the abstracts presented at the 2000 and 2001 EAU meetings were eventually published as full length articles, this rate being slightly higher than the equivalent figures identified for abstracts presented at the annual meetings of the American Urological Association, British Association of Urological Surgeons and the World Congress of Endourology in the same time period

[1]. The authors found that pre-clinical research studies were more likely to be published than clinical studies (53.3% vs 45%, $p < 0.05$) and that prospective studies were more likely to be published than retrospective studies (46.5% vs 32.2%, $p < 0.05$). While the latter finding seems obvious as everybody agrees on the importance of the high scientific value of prospective protocols, reasons for a higher publication rate for pre-clinical studies may be difficult to identify. One may speculate that authors of pre-clinical studies are more focused on the need to publish their research as this is the basis to receive grants to support their laboratories or more simply that these authors have more time available for scientific writing than colleagues who are also involved in clinical work.

Of note, Autorino et al did not find any difference in the rate of full length articles coming from abstracts presented in podium vs posters sessions. This interesting finding suggests that the abstract podium sessions may not necessarily be those hosting the most interesting research presented at a scientific meeting. The traditional dogma suggesting that podium presentations are of higher scientific value than poster presentations is destined to disappear under this evidence based information.

This article stimulated me to look at the overall number of abstract submissions and relative acceptance rates during the subsequent years. Table 1 summarizes this information and it shows how the

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Table 1 – Number of abstract submissions and acceptance rates at the annual EAU meetings from the year 2000 to the year 2006

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
# submitted abstracts	1524	1578	1546	1953	1989	2647	3143
% accepted abstracts	40.2	47	47	40.8	43.2	40.3	38.2

annual meeting of the EAU has been increasingly attracting the interest of urologists worldwide. During the time frame 2000–2006, the number of submitted abstracts has experienced a total 106% increase (18% increase per year). The abstract acceptance rate has remained more or less stable around the 40% level. As a further witness of the escalating success the EAU annual meeting, the number of abstracts submitted for presentation during the 2007 EAU meeting in Berlin – i.e. 3233 – has exceeded all previous figures!

Table 2 shows the performance of those countries which have been traditionally more active in terms of abstract submissions. Of note, it appears that the overall number of submitted abstracts does not necessarily relate to the final rate of acceptance. During the time frame 2000–2006 the following four countries (The Netherlands, Switzerland, Austria and United States of America) showed the highest abstract acceptance rates and this finding unequivocally highlights the excellent scientific value of urological institutions localized there.

When comparing the number of submissions sent for the 2005 and 2006 meeting, it becomes evident that this phenomenon has increased in all countries. This appears to be an evident sign of a generalized increase in the interest towards the EAU annual meeting which we all realize has really become “the” meeting for all European urologists.

The overwhelming success of the EAU annual meeting has mirrored the increasing interest that authors and readers have been contributing to European

Urology, the official journal of EAU. We all know that European Urology has been progressively improving its scientific profile during its initial 30 years of life under the wise editorship of Claude Schulman, now Editor Emeritus [4].

This process has culminated with the recent release of the 2005 impact factor which is based on the number of citations in the year 2005 related to articles published in European Urology in the years 2003 and 2004. The 2005 impact factor of 3.5 has equalled that of The Journal of Urology which used to be considered the referral journal in our specialty. Of note, the 2005 impact factor of European Urology Supplements, the independent journal which publishes proceedings of scientific meetings, also peaked to 3.5, becoming the highest among Supplements.

Since the take-over of the new editorial board, the Journal has undergone a complete restructuring in its layout and scientific contents [5] in order to remain competitive in the fast evolving third millennium. The interest from readers and authors in European Urology has been outstanding since the very beginning of 2006 [6]. At the Platinum Journal, we are proud to inform you that our growth seems to equal that of the EAU annual meeting which has been discussed above.

Table 3 reports on the number of monthly submissions seen over the last 3 years. The number of original and review articles, case reports and letters to the editor was higher in 2006 than in 2005, with an overall increase of 29%. When considering

Table 2 – Cumulative number of abstract submissions and acceptance rates at the annual EAU meetings from the year 2000 to the year 2006, shown per country

	# submitted abstracts	# accepted abstracts	acceptance rate
The Netherlands	409	229	55.9%
Switzerland	449	232	51.6%
Austria	843	432	51.2%
USA	490	250	51.0%
Germany	2481	1262	50.1%
Japan	189	93	49.2%
France	1098	534	48.6%
United Kingdom	1414	667	47.2%
South Korea	392	160	40.7%
Italy	1484	598	40.3%
Spain	431	154	35.7%
Greece	524	155	29.5%

Table 3 – Monthly submissions to European Urology (original articles, review articles, case reports, letters to the editor)

	2004	2005	2006	% increase 2005–2006
January	73	101	122	20.5
February	86	92	129	40.2
March	81	94	128	36.2
April	84	111	119	7.2
May	78	90	130	44.4
June	79	91	111	21.9
July	80	106	165	55.6
August	78	96	131	36.4
September	81	122	141	8.1
October	94	99	128	29.3
November	76	117		
December	94	99		
Monthly average	82	101.5	130.4	28.6

full length editorials which have rapidly gained a lot of popularity among authors and readers, the last year increase in submissions peaks to 36.8%!

Since September 2005, the month when the new editorial team took over, maximum attention has been given to speed up the peer review process while maintaining the highest level of scientific rigour. On the average, the time from the initial online submission to the first editorial response to authors has been 20 days. This figure does not take into account the manuscripts which have been straight rejected due to priority reasons.

In 2006, more than 5000 reviewers were invited to analyze manuscripts submitted to European Urology with a mean of more than 3 reviewers per manuscript. Recently we have completely restructured the list of our reviewers by creating 100 subgroups in order to identify the best experts in each area. For example, the “Prostate cancer” group of reviewers is currently divided in the following subgroups: Basic Science, Epidemiology, Diagnosis – General, Diagnosis – PSA, Prostate Cancer Surgery, Prostatic Biopsy, Staging, Brachytherapy – Radiotherapy, Hormonal and Non-Hormonal Medical Treatment, Prostate Cancer Pathology and Cryotherapy.

When submitting a manuscript through Editorial Manager, authors are now requested to identify the specific topic subgroup which, in turn, automatically leads the editors to the group of reviewers who are experts in that specific area. We feel indebted to our reviewers who have invested time and energy to

reconsider their profile by identifying their very specific areas of expertise.

I would also like to mention that the Executive Committee of the EAU has financially supported an important initiative aimed at improving the awareness of European Urology among the academic urologists in the USA. Since January 2007, the printed version of European Urology has been distributed to all staff members, fellows and residents of the University Departments of Urology on a monthly basis and we have already received an enthusiastic response to this initiative from many American colleagues and friends.

In conclusion, there is significant evidence demonstrating that the scientific success of both the EAU and European Urology, “Your” Platinum Journal, has been progressively increasing. I would like you to know that at the editorial office of European Urology our constant efforts to ensure that your journal is continually improving and evolving do not desist despite the continuing recognition for the high quality articles we are publishing.

Acknowledgements

Silvia De Bruin provided the author with data from EAU the annual meetings.

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