

Message from the Editor

On January 15, 1995, we published the first issue of *BCMD*, the modern reincarnation of the journal *Blood Cells*; we have now concluded our first five years of publication. Today virtually all of the major printed journals are offered over the Internet, and it is easy to forget that *BCMD* was the first such journal to be available in this format. It seems strange to contemplate now that as recently as the beginning of 1995, when we began publication, the Internet had not developed to the stage at which one could simply log into a Web site and download a file. Initially, we had to offer our readers the opportunity of picking up the PDF files directly from directories on our server at Scripps. But even during the first year of our publication the Internet revolution had reached a point where we could greatly simplify the access to our journal by setting up the Web site. The easy availability of the papers published in our journal, our excellent Board of Editors, and the rapid turnaround that we have been able to provide for authors have all contributed to the success of *BCMD*.

For more than a year after *BCMD* was founded we were our own publisher, something that would not have been feasible just a few years earlier, but that was made quite practical by the rapid advances in computer technology. In 1996 we were fortunate to be able to form an alliance with Academic Press, which now owns and publishes *BCMD*. Our publisher has foresightedly continued to make the journal available, without restriction, on our Web site at the Scripps Research Institute. Now Academic Press will be incorporating *BCMD* into its own IDEAL site, where it will be available to its subscribers.

There are many different measures that one may apply to the success of a journal. From the perspective of a publisher or owner of a journal it may be the number of paid subscribers or advertisers. From the perspective of the editors, the quality of the papers submitted and the number of people who read and cite the contents of the journal is more important. The response to the *BCMD* experiment has been gratifying in every respect. An average of 8,000 visits are made to our Web site every month. The quality and the number of papers that we receive have improved steadily. This has been reflected in the rapidly rising impact factor, the measure that the Institute for Scientific Information has developed to estimate how frequently published work in a given journal is cited. We were gratified to see that the impact factor of *BCMD* is only very slightly below that of the venerable *British Journal of Haematology*.

As I entered my fifth year of editorship of this journal we initiated a search for a successor Editor-in-Chief to guide the journal into the 21st Century. I was enormously pleased that Dr. Marshall Lichtman, who has been a member of our editorial board since the inception of the journal, has agreed to undertake this task as of March 1, 2000. I am sure that Dr. Lichtman is known to most of our readers. A professor of medicine at the University of Rochester, and Executive Vice-President for Research and Medical Affairs and Scientific Director of the Leukemia Society of America, he is a hematologist with extraordinarily broad understanding. For the last 20 years Dr. Lichtman and I have served as co-editors of *Williams' Hematology*, and I know on a firsthand basis that he will be the ideal editor for *BCMD*. He brings to the editorship the balanced judgment and writing skills an outstanding editor must have.

I am confident that under Dr. Lichtman's leadership the journal will continue to prosper.

Ernest Beutler
Editor