

The APJAI: A Prospective View

The launching of the *Asian Pacific Journal of Allergy and Immunology* coincided with the Fifth International Congress of Immunology, which was held at Kyoto, Japan in 1983. That meeting was the first world-wide assembly of immunologists to be held in Asia; thus, the inauguration of this new *Asian Journal* during that year was especially timely. Since then, the regular publication of the *Journal* has depended on the dedicated efforts of Professor Somchai Bovornkitti and his colleagues in Thailand.

The quality of the *Journal* has steadily improved, with excellent papers of a high scientific standard being provided by contributors. The *Journal* and its editors should, therefore, be congratulated on making a very successful start. However, we cannot rest on our laurels, we must build on the past to make the *Journal* even stronger in the future.

In reflecting on the reasons behind the establishment of the *Journal*, I think that the major ones may be summarised as follows: Some Asian immunologists have had difficulty in getting their papers published in major international journals owing to obstacles in communicating with many of the geographically remote immunology centres and to the difficulties involved in attending major international meetings. Also, because of the imbalances in scientific standards caused by the ethnic, climatic and economic diversities of Asia, it

has been difficult to conduct meaningful and productive interaction even among scientists of Asian countries. Nonetheless, there are many immunological problems characteristic of tropical and subtropical areas that need to be made better known to the international immunological community. Another difficulty for us in publishing papers is related to language problems and to the editorial bias against papers outside some editors' limited fields of interest. The *Journal* was launched to surmount such obstacles and it has largely done so.

I am deeply impressed by the enthusiasm that Professor Somchai has brought to the task of raising the scientific standard of this new publication. However, because it is much more difficult to raise a child than to deliver the baby, we should be prepared to face any difficulties arising in the future with regard to the continued publication of the *Journal*. To ensure that the *Journal* will be able to overcome any such challenges, we must take steps now that will build on the achievements of the past. The following are some of the measures that could be taken to improve the *Journal*. First, although there is an obvious need for a publication dealing with immunological problems characteristic of Asia, the editors must establish solid editorial principles that define the uniqueness and importance of the *Journal* to the immunological

community. At least one editorial meeting may have to be held to establish these principles and to discuss problems that may arise in the future. Second, the *Journal* should obtain moral support from national immunological societies in Asian and Pacific countries. Third, in order to establish a sound financial basis for the *Journal*, efforts will have to be made to increase circulation not only in Asian countries, but also in Europe and the Americas. Book distributors may facilitate this task and advertisements may be placed in other journals and professional newsletters to make the *Journal* better known. Finally, the *Journal* will have to maintain the high standard of scientific papers it is currently publishing. However, while the maintenance of the quality is essential, minority viewpoints should not be rejected out of hand, but considered in light of their role in fulfilling the *Journal's* objectives.

The pace of progress in both basic and clinical immunology is still accelerating. Perhaps in no other discipline can basic molecular findings be so quickly translated into clinical practice and the practical observations on patients' condition be so rapidly interpreted in the context of basic molecular and cellular mechanisms. The *Journal* has a unique role to play in fostering the exchange of information among investigators in Asia and other continents where basic and

clinical interests are similar. By maintaining the high scientific standard of this *Journal*, Asian immunologists may be able to persuade public and legislative organizations to recognise the importance of immunological research in the struggle to prevent disease and to promote a greater understanding of basic biological principles. The

quality of papers, extent of circulation, and the scientific impact of the *Journal* are all aspects that must be considered carefully and realistically.

A child has been born and is growing steadily; now we must nourish that child. This will be possible with the help of Asian and Pacific immunologists who use the

Journal to develop new means for interaction and collaboration in the field of immunology.

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