

Acta Orthopaedica (Scandinavica)

Editor's Report on Volume 75, 2004

Production

The 6 regular issues of volume 75 (74, 2003; 73, 2002) contained 784 (774; 719) printed pages with 123 (124; 122) Articles (10 of them case reports and technical notes), 3 (6; 4) Editorials, 3 (0; 4) Review–How I do it articles, 10 (7; 7) Book reviews and 1 (4; 0) Letter to the editor. We have published 3 (4; 4) Supplements (3 doctoral theses). The total number of pages printed in 2004 was 1035 (893; 976).

645 manuscripts (one quarter case reports) were submitted in 2004 (2003; 414, 2002; 417, 2001; 444, 2000; 483, 1999; 454, 1998; 489, 1997; 502, 1996; 461). Half of them were clinical, one third case reports (less than 10% accepted), and one fifth experimental. The increase of ms submitted may in part be explained by our online submission system, Manuscript Manager, which started Feb 2004.

One fifth (one quarter 2003, one third 2002) of the manuscripts were submitted from The Netherlands and Scandinavia. The Netherlands submitted 45 ms (2003; 26), Sweden 38 (37) ms, Denmark 25 (24), Finland 19 (13), Norway 18 (7) and Iceland 1 ms. Thus, the absolute numbers of ms submitted from The Netherlands and Scandinavia has increased from 107 year 2003 to 146 year 2004.

Most manuscripts were submitted from UK 68 (27 year 2003), Turkey 66 (36), Japan 56 (65), and Germany 42 (41).

Handling times and acceptance rate

The handling times have decreased thanks to Manuscript Manager (see below). During 2004 the mean time from submittance to first letter from coeditor was 5 weeks. Excluding case reports the time was 7 weeks. The mean time from submission to publication was for most manuscripts between 1 and 1.5 year. The mean time from acceptance to publication was 7 months.

The acceptance rate 2004 was 20% and has decreased from the 30% we have had since 1997.

Subscriptions

On Dec 2004 (2003; 2002; 2001) we had 4 830 (4 639; 4 580; 4 859) subscribers. 3 279 (3 164 (3 065; 3 020) were collective subscribers, 1 237 institutional (mainly libraries), 69 personal and 245 were free ex, donated mainly to the Baltic countries (with Acta free on the Net these free ex will be withdrawn year 2005 (Tables 1 and 2).

Institutional (mainly libraries) subscriptions have decreased by 27% during 1999–2004, from 1703 to 1237

(Table 3). According to our publisher this is a general phenomenon because of the stiffening economy of the libraries and the substantial increases of the subscription prices for many journals owned by the large, for-profit, publishers (Acta is an exception being a non-profit journal owned by NOF). A still larger decrease will follow over the next years because Acta since 2005 is an Open Access journal, free on the Net immediately after publication. The previous 3 years, 2002–04 Acta was free on the Net 6 months after publication.

Finances

Our economy is good, see separate report from Peter Frandsen.

Three important decisions 2004

In an Editorial in Acta's first issue 2005 we announced that:

The Dutch Orthopaedic Association joins the Nordic Orthopedic Federation.

Acta Orthopaedica Scandinavica changes its name to Acta Orthopaedica

Acta Orthopaedica becomes an Open Access journal, immediately after publication free on the Net.

In 1984 the Dutch Orthopaedic Association (DOA) accepted a collective membership subscription to Acta and participation in the Editorial Board. This cooperation has been successful, and the General Assemblies of DOA and NOF thus decided that DOA should join NOF as a full member in June 2004.

As some of you may have observed, the word "Scandinavica" on the cover of our journal has gradually been fading out in the last 2 issues of 2004 and it has now disappeared from this first issue of 2005. After a lively debate, the NOF and Acta Boards decided to drop the word Scandinavica—a clear indication that Acta Orthopaedica is a truly international journal.

To further strengthen the position of our journal, from 2005 Acta will be free on the Net immediately after publication. This means that Acta will be the first major Open Access (OA) orthopedic journal. It is a truism to say that OA is of importance for both our authors and our readers: with no barrier to access, all articles can be identified easily and read by anyone at any time—with updated information just a mouseclick away. This reduces the risk that an article will be overlooked and increases the chance that it will be cited. We believe that this will mean a lot for the advancement of Acta and orthopedics.

Impact factor

Acta's impact factor was 10 years ago 0.6, for 2002 it was 1.2 and for year 2003 it was 0.8 (JBJS Am 1.9, JBJS Br 1.5, CORR 1.4). Note that these figures refer to what was published 2 years earlier, i.e. years 1999 and 2000.

Awards

The first competition for year 2000 attracted 21 manuscripts and 4 prize winners were selected. The competition for year 2001 surprisingly resulted in only 6 manuscripts and none of them were found prize-worthy. The competition for 2002 resulted in 13 manuscripts and 2 award winners were selected. The competition for 2003 attracted 10 manuscripts, 2 Award winners were selected. The competition for year 2004 resulted in 10 ms, 1 of which was not acceptable for publication. Of the remaining 9 ms, none was considered prize-worthy.

Thus, the Award experiment has not been successful. The future of awards was discussed at the Editors' meetings 2004. We discussed other forms for the awards: more of them (4 per year at 5 000 EUR each, selected by editors from all accepted ms) but at the end there was unanimous opinion from all editors to stop the awards, at least for some years.

Manuscript Manager

Our electronic manuscript system for electronic handling of manuscripts, including the review process, Manuscript Manager, started Feb 2004 we have chosen, Manuscript Manager (MM). The system means that manuscripts are submitted online and electronically sent to coeditors and referees who also answer electronically. The introduction has, not unexpectedly, met with some problems, which, however, have been solved. We have heard positive words from authors and referees who have found the system easy to manage and all secretaries and coeditors are satisfied. As a result of the system the number of submitted manuscripts has increased, our rejection rate has increased and our handling-times have decreased, see above. Whether we get more high-quality ms is difficult to say.

Pool of accepted but not published manuscripts

In May 2005 we had 70 accepted (the oldest ones accepted in Jan 2005) but not published ms despite we have increased the number of printed pages and the rejection rate. This means that we already have articles covering 3 issues, half a year's production. It also means that the time from acceptance to publication will be around 8–9 months, too long. To meet this situation we plan to further increase the number of printed pages and the rejection rate.

New co-editor

Per Aspenberg, Linköping, Sweden replaces Johan Kärrholm who because of other priorities had to finish his Acta work. Johan is thanked by all of us for his important services for Acta's authors and readers during 5 years

Editors' meetings

The Editors have had 2 meetings, April and November. Some issues at these meetings are summarized below.

Much time was spent on fine tuning of Manuscript Manager including the cooperation with our statistician, Jonas Ranstam, who as an important role in our evaluation of manuscripts. JR presented a lecture on statistics, mixed models.

We discussed how to encourage our referees, they are not always as speedy as we want! We (like editors of other journals!) have discussed this repeatedly, no good solutions were found. The Awards were discussed, see above.

Anders Rydholm informed about the Open Access movement and Olle Svensson told us that statistics from our publisher shows a sharp increase in the number of Acta articles electronically opened as a result of eActa. This number will certainly increase with Acta immediately free on the Net.

The Future

Open Access has come to stay; an increasing number of the large international grant givers now require funded authors to publish their research results in Open Access journals or, in other ways, make publications immediately available on the Net, for free. Acta is now an Open Access journal. This means that we, in an unknown time period, will loose all library subscribers, today our main source of income. This problem is not unique for Acta but is faced by many other journals planning for Open Access. Many of them believe that journals in the future will be author-paid but reader-free. Thanks to our good economy this is not an acute problem for Acta but in the long run I think we have to prepare our readers for a publication-fee. Already today some journals, owned by commercial publishers and not free on the Net, offer authors to have their specific article laid free on the Net for a cost around 1000–1500 USD. Obviously some authors are already prepared to pay for Open Access publication. A publication fee could be smoothly introduced. We have also discussed the possibilities of a submission-fee. Fees require that Acta is an attractive journal to publish in! This means efficient handling of manuscripts and publication of high-quality, much-cited, articles.

Anders Rydholm
Lund 2005-05-25

Table 1. Collective subscriptions

	2004	2003	2002	2001
Norway	421	393	420	420
Finland	489	405	390	384
Denmark	687	656	640	642
Sweden	1,180	1,245	1,160	1,125
Iceland	18	27	20	20
The Netherlands	469	489	435	429
Total	3,279	3,164	3,065	3,020

Table 2. Distribution of Acta in the top 13 (more than 20 subscriptions) foreign countries

	2004	2003	2002	2001
USA	328	341	396	418
Japan	258	255	302	335
UK	84	96	155	156
Spain	69	61	64	78
Germany	50	54	57	62
Italy	45	35	50	56
South Korea	39	33	37	36
France	26	30	39	35
Switzerland	22	29	27	31
Australia	22	23	21	20
Taiwan	22	12	10	7
Canada	20	19	20	21
Belgium	20	12	4	3

Table 3. Institutional and personal subscriptions

	2004	2003	2002	2001	2000	1999
Institutional	1237	1325	1433	1516	1616	1703
Individual	69	150	82	80	64	59

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Sweden	58	48	41	37	38	31	28	19	22	28
Denmark	27	18	27	20	25	6	5	6	13	14
Norway	15	16	7	7	18	10	3	11	8	4
Finland	20	19	14	13	19	1	6	6	9	5
Iceland			1	0	1				0	1
The Netherlands	26	32	23	26	45	7	5	14	10	6
Sum	146	133	113	103	146	55	47	56	62	58
Japan	69	50	47	65	56	10	9	7	12	7
UK	42	46	29	27	68	7	4	5	6	14
USA	10	15	13	5	18	5	5	7	6	3
Israel	14	12	12	7	13	5	2	2	1	3
Germany	29	43	47	41	42	7	5	10	13	11
India	7	4	7	6	26	1	2	1	0	
Greece	9	6	8	10	16	0		1	1	2
Canada	4	1		4	4	0		2	0	3
Italy	13	10	21	9	17	1	3		5	2
Australia	5	2	1	1	5	5	1	1	2	
Austria	16	10	8	7	13	1	3	3	2	3
Spain	17	10	11	9	28	3	1	4	1	1
San Marino		1							0	
France	6	7	6	7	9	3	1	1	2	2
Belgium	6	3	4	12	10	0	1	2	2	3
Taiwan	20	7	10	12	16	2	1	2	0	1
Kuwait			1						0	
Singapore	1			1		0	1		0	
Hungary	1	6	4	2	3	0		1	1	
Saudi Arabia	2	1		2	1	0		1	0	
Switzerland	6	6	4	6	14		2	2	0	2
Scotland				1		1			1	
Hong Kong		1	1	2				1	0	
Marocco			1						0	
Ireland	2	2	2	3	5	1	2	3	0	1
Bulgaria				1					0	
Poland	3	2		8	5	0	2	1	0	2
Turkey		38	28	36	66	0	4	3	4	3
Thailand	2				1	0			0	
Croatia		1	2	1					0	
China				5	12		1		1	
Yugoslavia		3							0	
Brasilia		2	1		1				0	
S Chorea	13	11	20	14	13	3	3	3	0	2
New Zealand				1	1				0	
Czech Rep	1		2	1	3	0			0	
Iran				1	6				0	
Argentina	2	2	4	2		2	1	3	2	2
Others					14					
Sum	483	444	417	414	632	114	102	123	124	125

^a Does not include How I do it articles, Reviews, and Editorials.