

Editorial

The State of the *American Journal of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene* 2012

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Editor-in-Chief

As Jim Kazura takes on his position as President of the American Society of Tropical Medicine, I become the *Journal's* Editor-in-Chief during his presidential term. The Editor-in-Chief pushes the agenda of the society and focuses on advancing the broad scientific fields to which the Society contributes. As former ASTMTH President Ed Ryan pointed out, "a primary purpose of ASTMTH is to facilitate evidence-based progress in tropical medicine and hygiene." We do this through a number of approaches, including our Annual Meeting, our *Journal*, the Society's support of trainees through various scholarships and fellowship programs, public advocacy, outreach through the Web and Newsletter, and working directly with the media and public officials. All of these activities serve to enhance the value of membership, and through increased membership, the ASTMTH can increase its influence in policy and society, an important goal.

We would argue that *American Journal of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene* is the leading international tropical medicine and global health journal. Ever since its predecessor was established in 1921, and its current name established in 1952, the *AJTMH* continues in the tradition articulated by Louis Hackett, the first *AJTMH* editor: "the new *Journal* [is] more comprehensive than the old [sic] in the expanded compass of its interests, hopes to offer its readers a broader sweep and richer content than before, and provide a channel of communication to the workers in every field of tropical medicine and hygiene." The *AJTMH* reflects the priorities of Society members as a key feature for the scientific basis of tropical medicine advocacy. In recent years, the ASTMTH has reinvigorated its commitment to policy advocacy on issues relevant to its membership, and through digital and print media, is a key institution involved in informing the public of the scientific, clinical, public health and global health implications of the fine work carried out by ASTMTH members as reported at the Annual Meeting and in the *Journal*.

Over the past 11 years under Jim Kazura's tenure as Editor-in-Chief and with my own involvement as Associate Editor since 2001, the *Journal* has adapted to the cutting edge of biomedical publishing. The *Journal* has incorporated electronic submission and handling of manuscripts allowing for more rapid publication and immediate Open-Access articles. The *Journal's* scope more clearly articulates cutting edge scholarship in a broader range of scholarly interests reflected in new directions of Society membership and *Journal* readership and authorship. With even-increasing submissions, our review process has become more stringent requiring higher standards of data, evidence and analysis for publication. Concomitantly the number and quality of manuscript submissions from Africa, Asia and South America has increased and are a considerable representation of our publications. Yet, as the scientific fields within the *Journal's* scope evolve, the subject matter and analytical tools published in past years might no longer pass muster. For example, malaria clinical trials such as intermittent preventive therapy (IPT), of substantial public health interest, would need to have drug resistance marker assessments reported simultaneously to be considered high priority for publication. Surveillance studies based on serology, standard sorts of papers in the past, similarly might not pass muster unless substantially new insights leading to new approaches to control and prevention are put forth based on the data. While we encourage clinical case reports and series, biologically or clinically

significant novelty is essential. In clinical tropical medicine, we seek to advance new diagnostics and therapeutics given the high importance of our Clinical Group to the Society. We have become the leading journal for medical entomology and all aspects of tropical virology, with substantial representation among the Section Editors and Editorial Board membership. Ultimately, we seek to provide agile, flexible, rapid, and author-friendly yet rigorous service to the tropical medicine community, as we encourage our authors to send their best work to the *AJTMH*. In return, we are committed to promulgating our members' work beyond the pages of the *Journal* to the general public through modern channels of digital and print communication, including monthly journal highlights and press releases from the Society of particularly topical or timely reports.

The Society and *Journal* seek ever-more engagement with the new generation of scholars and advocates interested in tropical medicine and global health. Indeed, over the past two years, such interest has become manifest in the hundreds-more attendees (with record attendance), submitted abstracts, and dozens of symposiums reflecting the emerging interests in global health at the Annual Meeting. New areas of particular importance include global health advocacy as present from scientific, public health and advocacy viewpoints (viz. the focus on cholera in Haiti in the present issue of the *Journal*). We are interested in the intersection of our traditional focuses on tropical parasites, bacteria and viruses to include HIV and tuberculosis, with a particular focus on these diseases in the resource poor settings. The *Journal* seeks more submissions in these important areas, which will be reflected in a new Section Editor for Global Health of the *Journal* to be appointed this year.

Given the complexity and multidisciplinary nature of tropical medicine and global health topics, we are now welcoming highly relevant topical reviews focused on topics of high current interest to the *Journal* readership. Such reviews may be submitted at the invitation of the Editors but leading scholars in any priority field are welcome to contact the Editors regarding the submission of a review. Similarly, we strongly encourage research groups, international congresses and conference organizers, and interest groups within the ASTMTH to consider publishing concerted, synergistic works as a *Journal* supplement or, for particularly timely issues, as meeting reports in regular monthly issues. Those interested ought to direct inquiries to the Managing Editor, and we will seek to expedite the publication of important matters.

The ASTMTH Council has approved the development of a mobile media application (App) to allow our membership, readership and other interested parties to interact in a timely way with both the Society and the *Journal* and so enhance the value of membership. At the Journal Symposium at the 80th Annual Meeting in Philadelphia and informally among Society leaders, meeting attendees, and especially the younger generation, the Editors solicited feedback about how to develop and deploy the ASTMTH/AJTMH app. As we move forward this year on the app, we look forward to hearing from our membership about better ways to serve them through print, digital and mobile media. We expect that the next years of the *American Journal of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene* will put forth the important scholarly contributions of its members and authors towards the goal of improving global health based on science in all of its varied manifestations.