

# *Acta Otorrinolaringológica Española:* An Important Step Forward for a High-Quality Scientific Journal

With this issue, we begin a new stage in our journal, marked by two important events: on the one hand, the mandatory change in its editor, due to the completion of the statutory term in the post and the result of the recent elections in our Society, and on the other hand, another very different change in that it is an option exercised, namely the switch of publisher. At this decisive moment, we have thought it best for the person who has been the editor until now and the incoming editor to offer a joint overview of the evolution of *Acta Otorrinolaringológica Española* during the last 6 years and an analysis of its aspirations for the future.

Before going into detail on this analysis of the last 6 years, we must express our gratitude to the two editorial committees for the work they have done under the leadership of Dr Miquel Quer. In the period 2001-2003, the Editorial Committee comprised Dr J.P. Rodrigo Tapia as Secretary and Dr P. Gil Loyzaga and Dr J.A. Rosell Antón as members. In the period 2004-2006, the Editorial Committee has been made up of Dr X. León Vintró as Secretary and Dr M. Mañós Pujol and Dr L. García-Ibáñez Cisneros as members. To all of them, very many thanks their efforts and hard work.

We must also point out the inestimable efforts made in the past and still today by the reviewers. Without a doubt, their unstinting and little publicised work is of fundamental importance to obtain the levels of quality our journal has acquired. To all of them, thank you very much for your effective and generous collaboration.

In addition, we should thank all of the personnel of the headquarters of the SEORLyPCF for their hard work, and most particularly María Jesús Rodríguez, who has played an outstanding role in our journal.

Justice demands that we acknowledge too the SANED publishing house for its work and its efforts to publish the magazine during the period 2001-2006. The SANED publishing house has taken great pride in improving the quality of our publication and in increasing its dissemination and its scientific impact, and even though today we are changing our publisher in search of new horizons, it is necessary to highlight its merits.

## ANALYSIS OF THE PERIOD 2001-2006

Since its foundation, *Acta Otorrinolaringológica Española* has undergone many changes in format, frequency and focus, to reflect at all times the quality of the

otorhinolaryngology in this country. In the last 6 years, the journal has followed an editorial policy aimed at achieving a publication of the greatest scientific quality that would be attractive for its readers and increase its national and international recognition. We feel that the main function of our journal must be to provide scientific information that is useful for the diagnosis and treatment of our patients, as well as for the progress of our speciality.

Nonetheless, we are aware that the future renown of our journal, along with the quality and number of the manuscripts received, greatly depends on the *Acta Otorrinolaringológica Española* being able to enter the select group of journals with an impact factor acknowledged by the Institute for Scientific Information (ISI). To this end, the journal's management and that of our Society have followed a well-defined editorial policy aimed at beginning and consolidating all necessary steps to be able to opt for such an impact factor in the medium term. The most important aspects worked on over these years are mentioned below.

1. Considerable effort has been made to improve the basic standards of quality, and the first of these is the punctuality of its publication, that has been largely maintained over these 6 years, a fundamental element to offer a good image and highly valued in all quality standards. Both the committees and secretariat and the publishing house have made the greatest effort to preserve that punctuality.

2. The mean time needed for the publishing process has also been improved. Work has been undertaken to reduce the waiting time for acceptance and subsequent publication of articles, of fundamental importance so that the papers submitted can be disseminated as rapidly as possible, to the benefit of both the authors and readers. On this point we need to thank the reviewers, who have made a special effort to provide their comments in a short space of time.

3. Since 2002, the publication has grown to 10 issues a year (one a month and a double issue for June-July and another for August-September), and this has continued to the present. This increase in issues has allowed for greater speed in publication and is a factor taken into account in the journal's impact.

4. In 2002, the rules of publication were adapted to make the journal conform to the regulations of the International Committee of Publishers of Medical Journals (Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals. N Engl J Med. 1997;336:309-15).

5. The weighting of the articles on case studies has been reduced. To this end, an attempt has been made to reserve 80% of the journal's space to research articles (both clinical and basic research) and 20% to clinical and surgical notes. We feel that, although case studies need to be published, it is preferable to boost research articles: thus support is given to the groups opting for research papers and, in the long run, this will enhance *Acta Otorrinolaringológica Española*'s power and solidity, with an impact on the most stable citation indices.

6. The abstracts of our articles have been improved. The abstract is of great importance (whether in the Spanish or the English version), as it is used for inclusion in the databases for bibliographical references. For this reason, the drafting has been structured in 4 sections: Objective, Material and methods, Results and Conclusions. The English of the abstracts has been improved through the introduction of a medical supervisor for the translations.

7. Various formal aspects of the publication have gradually been improved: font, paper, cover design and paging.

8. The conveyance of copyright was introduced along with the declaration of original work and intellectual property of the manuscripts submitted.

9. Since 2003 the complete journal is available on the Internet, a factor improving its dissemination.

10. Starting in 2004, advertising in the journal was limited to two large blocks, one at the start and the other at the end. This has allowed the sections on scientific articles to be free of advertising, making it easier to read the scientific papers and consult the advertising.

11. At the end of 2004, we started with the journal's publication in English on the Internet. Without a doubt, this is one of the most important initiatives as it makes a significant contribution to increasing the number of potential readers, as well as improving the "citation" of the papers published in *Acta Otorrinolaringológica Española*. The English edition, available free of charge, comprises the entire text of the journal in PDF format and it draws on the same resources as the edition in Spanish.

12. In 2006, the setting up of the National and International Editorial Committees was completed. The existence of stable editorial committees is an important condition for success in terms of the impact factor (IF). For this reason, the colleagues selected in Spain and abroad have good experience in publications, and they will have the key role of reviewing the manuscripts submitted for publication.

## NEW STAGE

For all of us who have held positions of responsibility on *Acta Otorrinolaringológica Española*, it is clear that the IF is the main unresolved issue and the priority goal to be achieved.

Despite all the efforts made so far, there are major structural limitations hindering the necessary actions. For this reason, a very well-pondered decision has recently been taken to change the publishing house and find one with a horizon closer in similarity to that of our journal, a publisher with the attitude and capacity to help *Acta*

*Otorrinolaringológica Española* to break into the IF. After analyzing the various options, it became clear that Doyma-Elsevier offers the best guarantees for this goal. Doyma-Elsevier is a large publishing group with experience in handling situations similar to that experienced by our Journal, and with verified experience in Spain with helping Spanish-language publications enter the IF. Doyma-Elsevier is a leading publishing company that will allow us to achieve goals that were very difficult before now:

1. First of all, a gradual migration will be introduced for the reception and handling of the editorial content over the Internet, a fact that will speed up and notably facilitate all of the publishing process.

2. Secondly, it will allow for a more professional publication, with revision and unification of style, both in terminology and in appearance, contributing to a very considerable qualitative advance.

3. After an analysis of the distribution of our journal, we undertake to develop strategies to improve this aspect.

4. Steps will be taken to enable our journal to enter a partnership with PubMed, the department of the National Library of Medicine in the United States offering free access to MedLine. In this way, as well as consulting the abstracts directly for the bibliographical references of the articles published, any Internet user connecting to MedLine through PubMed will have access to the entire contents of the journal in English.

5. It will help the Editorial Committee with all the planning steps needed to be able to be included in the IF.

It is evident that this will require the effort of all parties concerned: we have to foster the citation of the articles published in our journals by our fellow otorhinolaryngologists. To this end, we have to progress from a local title to an international journal attracting a much larger segment of the population and cited in other publications, an essential factor for which its distribution and dissemination have to increase.

It is logical that, at this point, we should focus on the question of the IF. However, this is not the only quality index for scientific journals, nor the only reason leading authors to choose a particular journal in which to publish the results of their research. The publication's dissemination must be even more important. That is why *Acta Otorrinolaringológica Española* has to work to improve in this area. We must compete with other titles to attract the best articles and the best researchers. To do so, we must continue to place a premium on the scientific quality of its original articles. This must not make us forget, of course, the important activities of ongoing training that have always characterized the journal, so the Revision Articles and the Updates on classical or innovative issues will be strengthened to make the journal attractive and interesting to both specialist otorhinolaryngologists and trainee residents.

The improvement in the quality of *Acta Otorrinolaringológica Española* over these years and the fact that we are beginning to view access to the IF as a possibility do not mean that we have crowned any summit. Quite

the contrary, what we have achieved is to position ourselves well on an important climb that must encourage us to all to continue this long-term venture involving teams and relays. Finally, it must be pointed out that the successes of the ACTA OTORRINOLARINGOLÓGICA ESPAÑOLA are and always will be, in pride of place, the successes of the authors of the scientific papers who have chosen our journal to publish the results of their research and, secondly, of all those people, from the management of the journal and the Editorial Committee and the Governing Body of the SEORLyPCF, who have contributed to its development from the outset and, finally, of all the readers who, with their comments, have helped and encouraged us over the years: in short, of the entire SEORLyPCF.

*Miquel Quer Agustí<sup>a</sup> and Juan Pablo Rodrigo Tapia<sup>b</sup>*

<sup>a</sup>Former editor of *Acta Otorrinolaringológica Española* (2001-2006).

<sup>b</sup>Editor of *Acta Otorrinolaringológica Española* (January 2007).

## REFERENCES

- Quer M. ACTA OTORRINOLARINGOLÓGICA ESPAÑOLA: Una Nueva Etapa [editorial]. *Acta Otorrinolaringol Esp.* 2001;52:1.  
Quer M, Rodrigo Tapia JP, Gil Loyzaga P, Rosell Antón JA. Editorial. *Acta Otorrinolaringol Esp.* 2002;53:1.  
Quer M. Acta Otorrinolaringológica Española: Objetivos para los próximos años [editorial]. *Acta Otorrinolaringol Esp.* 2004;55:1.  
Quer M. Editorial. *Acta Otorrinolaringol Esp.* 2004;55:451.