This editorial continues our tradition of an annual summary of the status of the journal. Our editorship began in the spring of 1999 with goals of publishing high-quality papers, providing authors with timely review and publication of their manuscripts, and of publishing papers of interest to our readers. We will summarize trends during the past year, some changes in the journal, and thank several people for their help.

**Publication of High-Quality Papers**

In an era in which each of us has enormous difficulty reading all of the important papers in our areas of interest, it is important that experts in some way advise readers which papers are novel and valid. An important mechanism in this process of advising readers is peer review, and attempts by journals to select the most novel valid papers for publication. This process is sometimes painful, because manuscripts are often judged by reviewers and editors to be valid but not of sufficient novelty to be of great interest to readers of the journal.

There is obviously no perfect tool for selection of the most novel manuscripts; reviewers and members of our editorial board advise the editors, who then discuss each manuscript. The process is important because, like discussions at groups that review grant applications, the decisions influence directions of research that are funded and published.

There also is no perfect tool for evaluation of journals, and the quality of papers published in journals. Impact factor, although it is sometimes criticized, is one measure of quality of papers. In some Universities, especially in Europe and Japan, decisions about promotion and tenure are sometimes based in part on impact factor of the journal in which papers are published. Thus, impact factor has assumed greater importance recently, in relation to selection of journals in which authors wish to publish their work.

The impact factor for ATVB again increased substantially this past year (Figure 1), and it has increased more than 50% during the past few years. Because there is a substantial lag-time in impact factor, the large increases in 1999 and 2000 were primarily determined by decisions during the editorship of Dr. Alan Fogelman. Impact factor of other journals in this area of research have fluctuated, but as a group have remained relatively constant (Figure 1). We believe that ATVB is recognized as an appropriate forum for publication of excellent papers related to atherosclerosis, lipoproteins, vascular biology, and thrombosis.

We also have tracked the “immediacy index,” which provides information about the frequency of references to articles during the first year of their publication. The immediacy index for ATVB has increased substantially in the past few years (Figure 2).

**Rapid Review and Publication**

An important goal is to provide expert, polite, and rapid review of manuscripts that are submitted to the Journal. The average time from receipt of new manuscripts to notification of authors about the first decision has decreased substantially (Figure 3). The review time for Rapid Publication is substantially shorter.

Time from acceptance of manuscripts to publication in print has decreased during the past few years (Figure 4). Accepted manuscripts are published electronically (ATVBe-First), before the print version, within about 7 days after acceptance.

The number of manuscripts submitted to the Journal continues to increase steadily (Figure 5). Because this number is now so large, we attempt to protect our Reviewers from reviewing excessive numbers of manuscripts with triage by the Editors. If review by at least two Editors indicates that a manuscript will not be competitive for publication, the manuscript is not sent for review, and is rejected.

We wish to express our heart-felt thanks to our All-Star Reviewers, who have reviewed twelve or more papers within 10 days or less: Drs Godfrey Getz, Richard Havel, Lewis Kuller, Philip Barter, Lars Berglund, Jan Breslow, John Crouse, Zvonmir Katusic, Theodore Masszone, and Renu Virmani. Expeditious, expert reviews clearly are an enormous service to authors, as well as the journal.

**Our Constituencies**

About half of manuscripts submitted to the journal focus on atherosclerosis and/or lipoproteins. This is an extremely important area of research, and we believe that the Journal is the leading forum for papers in this area of research.

Vascular Biology is a flourishing discipline, and we are attempting to provide a home for manuscripts in this area of research. Although the title of the journal is cumbersome, the name provides for authors and readers a clear definition of topics that are appropriate for the journal. We believe that the title of the journal therefore is useful for authors who are deciding where to send their manuscripts.

Studies of thrombosis, and especially the interaction between blood and blood vessels, are an important part of the journal. Steve Lentz and our editorial staff attended the 2003 meeting of the International Society of Thrombosis and Homeostasis to encourage participants to send their best work to the Journal.

Correspondence to Donald D. Heistad, MD, ATVB Editorial Office, 609 MRC, Cardiovascular Unit, The University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA 52242. E-mail ATVB@uiowa.edu

(Artierioscler Thromb Vase Biol, 2004;24:1-3.)

© 2004 American Heart Association, Inc.

Arterioscler Thromb Vase Biol, is available at http://www.atvbaha.org

DOI: 10.1161/01.ATV.0000112102.2869.39
believe that this is a realistic and appropriate goal, based on recent changes in impact factor (Figure 1).

ATVB is the official journal of the ATVB Council of the American Heart Association, the European Vascular Biology Organization, and the Japanese Medical Vascular Biology Association. The link with these organizations provides a strong base of support for the journal.

Overseas Offices

On January 1, 2004, the London office of the journal closed. Professor James Scott, the Editor of the London office for more than 8 years, performed an outstanding job. Professor Scott, his Associate Editors, and the staff were efficient and maintained consistently high standards. We wish to express our sincerest thanks for a great job.

The London office merges with the Stockholm office, as the European office of the Journal. Professor Goran Hansson will continue as the European Editor. Professor Hansson, who will serve this year as Chair of the Nobel Committee for Physiology or Medicine, has impeccable qualifications for judging quality in science!

Professor Akira Takeshita provides great leadership as Asian Editor of ATVB. Because of Professor Takeshita’s efforts, the Journal is now published in Japanese, with support from AstraZeneca, and ATVB is the official Journal of the Japanese Medical Vascular Biology Association.

New Initiatives

Series of Brief Reviews, with Guest Editors, are now published in the journal. The goal of these series, entitled “ATVB in Focus,” is to provide timely reviews of topics of special importance. Current “ATVB in Focus” Series are:

- ABC Transporters and Cholesterol Efflux; Alan Tall, Guest Editor
- Extracellular Mediators in Atherosclerosis and Thrombosis; Marschall Runge, Guest Editor
- Non-Invasive Assessment of Atherosclerosis: from Structure to Function; William Haynes, Guest Editor
- Platelet Signal Transduction and Interactions with Vascular Cells; Skip Brass, Guest Editor
- Lipoproteins; James Scott, Guest Editor
- Endothelium; Frank Faraci, Guest Editor
- Smooth Muscle Cell: Developmental Emphasis; Giulio Gabbiani, Guest Editor

There have been rapid advances in electronic tracking systems, for submission of manuscripts, requests and submission of manuscript reviews, tracking of the status of manuscripts, and forwarding of accepted manuscripts for copyediting and printing. The Publishing Committee of the American Heart Association chose to implement a new electronic system, Bench>Press, which will be used by all AHA journals.

ATVB was chosen to implement the new electronic system for all AHA journals. Melissa Shrader and Connie Smith, working especially with Steve Lentz and William Haynes, and with the HighWire staff, brought the system online before the target date and remarkably painlessly. The system will be
of substantial help in the process of reviewing and publishing manuscripts.

A “Superfamily” of Risk Factors
I have refrained from using Editorials as a “Bully pulpit” to promote personal crusades. There is, however, a limitation in our understanding of atherosclerosis that I find extremely annoying.

Lists of risk factors (diabetes, male sex, smoking, etc.) are not organized in a logical way. I have proposed that we need a “superfamily” of cardiovascular risk factors. The proposal is in part fanciful, and meant to imitate cell and molecular biologists who have extensive, logically organized superfamilies of growth factors, signaling molecules, etc. But more importantly, organization of cardiovascular risk factors by mediator, mechanism, target organ, etc. would provide a framework for better understanding of the diseases. Are there families within the superfamily: eg, mechanical (arterial pressure and pulse pressure) and biochemical (dyslipidemia, hyperhomocystinemia)? What fraction of cardiovascular diseases is accounted for by each of the risk factors (ie, what is the attributed risk)?

My hope is that readers will respond to this challenge, and provide a great service to scientists and students by providing a structure for understanding risk factors.

Summary
As we begin the fifth year of editorship of the journal (with the term of the current editors continuing until 2007), ATVB seems to be doing well. The impact factor, as a reflection of quality of papers, increased remarkably again this year, and is very strong in comparison with other journals that focus on atherosclerosis, thrombosis, and vascular biology.

The number of manuscripts submitted continues to increase steadily. The time to first decision is short, and papers are published rapidly after acceptance. The Editors sincerely thank the Consulting Editors, members of the Editorial Board, reviewers (please see Acknowledgement to Reviewers at http://atvb.ahajournals.org), authors, and readers of the Journal. We encourage your feedback and advice, sent to atvb@uiowa.edu.

Reference
Arteriosclerosis, Thrombosis, and Vascular Biology, 2004
Donald D. Heistad
for the Editors

Arterioscler Thromb Vasc Biol. 2004;24:1-3
doi: 10.1161/01.ATV.0000112102.28859.39
Arteriosclerosis, Thrombosis, and Vascular Biology is published by the American Heart Association, 7272
Greenville Avenue, Dallas, TX 75231
Copyright © 2004 American Heart Association, Inc. All rights reserved.
Print ISSN: 1079-5642. Online ISSN: 1524-4636

The online version of this article, along with updated information and services, is located on the
World Wide Web at:
http://atvb.ahajournals.org/content/24/1/1

Permissions: Requests for permissions to reproduce figures, tables, or portions of articles originally published
in Arteriosclerosis, Thrombosis, and Vascular Biology can be obtained via RightsLink, a service of the
Copyright Clearance Center, not the Editorial Office. Once the online version of the published article for
which permission is being requested is located, click Request Permissions in the middle column of the Web
page under Services. Further information about this process is available in the Permissions and Rights
Question and Answer document.

Reprints: Information about reprints can be found online at:
http://www.lww.com/reprints

Subscriptions: Information about subscribing to Arteriosclerosis, Thrombosis, and Vascular Biology is online
at:
http://atvb.ahajournals.org//subscriptions/