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Editorial

1990—more changes in the Journal

Readers of this issue of *Journal of Medical Genetics* will notice the new design of both cover and contents. The whole BMJ group of journals has been redesigned for 1990 and some of the larger journals have increased to A4 size; this will be an option for the Journal in the future if there is further expansion. The changes go much further than this, however, and the start of a new year is a suitable time to draw attention to them.

A major change is the enlargement and internationalisation of the editorial committee to include a number of members from North America and continental Europe. This development reflects not only the growing readership and authorship from these regions, but the wider perception and international reputation of the Journal. *Journal of Medical Genetics* has always been an international journal, but it was in the past often perceived as 'The British Journal'. A more balanced editorial committee in terms of geography as well as specialities both recognises and will encourage international contributions.

At a practical level the appointment of Dr Michael Conneally as North American editor should remove some of the inconveniences that transatlantic authors have sometimes felt in having to submit papers to a European base. This, coupled with the use of FAX to

minimise delays and the early availability of abstracts through the American Society for Human Genetics 'electronic bulletin board', should remove any remaining barriers that may previously have deterred American authors from submitting papers.

Perhaps the most important development has been a gradual one—the progressively quicker publication time that, thanks to monthly publication and increased page numbers, has removed the longstanding backlog of papers, so that rapid publication is now the norm rather than the exception. The Journal is fully committed to maintaining this and improving it further where possible.

Looking ahead beyond 1990, what kind of journal should *Journal of Medical Genetics* be? The broad aim of the editors and editorial committee remains that of a well balanced journal, attracting high quality original papers and reviews, in close touch with the growing points of the field, and relevant to both clinicians and scientists working in medical and human genetics. We hope that the current changes will be a step further in this direction, and that both readers and authors will help the process by their active participation and comments.

PETER S HARPER