

Editorial

In June I participated in the 11th International Association of Veterinary Editors (IAVE) in Split, Croatia. The meeting is attended by veterinary editors from all over the world and held annually. In this editorial I report to our readers on the subjects discussed at the meeting and particularly in reference to our journal.

The chairperson of the group is Prof. Mary Christopher who has previously visited and lectured in Israel. She is the past editor of the journal "Veterinary Clinical Pathology". She was the person who started me off as editor of the Israel Journal of Veterinary Medicine (IJVM) and remains a great source of encouragement and support.

Among the editors, there were a few representing national journals like our own, such as "The Australian Veterinary Journal", "The Swedish Veterinary Journal", and "Veterinarskiarhiv" the journal of Croatian veterinarians. Journals dealing with specific topics included: "Veterinary Clinical Pathology", "Veterinary and Comparative Orthopedics and Traumatology" and "Veterinary Anesthesia and Analgesia".

A significant part of the meeting included discussions on the subjects of animal ethics and welfare. The IAVE has previously drawn up its recommendations. Each journal was required to present its "Instructions for Authors" with the aim of examining these aspects. The IJVM's approach to acceptance of articles in regard to animal ethics and welfare was found to fulfill the requirements. Our journal's instructions to authors states explicitly: "All material published in the IJVM must adhere to high ethical and animal welfare standards".

Informed Consent was another topic discussed by the group: This issue has largely been taken from the human medicine standards for publication where among the enlightened nations, privacy and confidentiality are basic human rights. Some proposed that this should also cover the publication of prospective and retrospective veterinary studies, although the names of the clients and pets would not be mentioned in the publication. The question of client permission for publication of a case after an animal has been euthanized was also discussed. Must the veterinarian obtain consent for publication from the owner under these circumstances? These are issues which need to be discussed in future meetings.

Peer review practices play a very important role in achieving a high standard for the journal. The IAVE has adopted the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) for Peer reviewers (2013) which states in its opening sentence: "Peer review in all its forms plays a role in ensuring the integrity of the scholarly record", which to me sums up the spirit of the peer review process. The search for the appropriate reviewer for an article is an ongoing issue and struggle. This is also true for the IJVM. Cooperation between journals has been proposed. I approached Dr. Gregor Majdic, editor of the "Slovenian Veterinary Research" journal and I hope we can find a common solution to this problem. Another issue discussed was "The best practice in the peer review process". How should an article be judged taking into account that the reviewers may be acquainted with the author/s? Some journals send their articles to the reviewers in a "blinded" or even "double blinded" manner, in order to overcome any element of bias on the part of the reviewers. The question of review forms and checklists is interesting, and I am considering introducing this approach into our review process.

Training peer reviewers is a task that I am considering. Questions regarding the peer review process were raised, such as: How can peer reviewers gain skills? What is the best way for reviewers to receive feedback? and the initiation of peer reviewers' tutorials. A meeting of our reviewers to explain what is required and in general how to review an article and what the journal expects would be a very important and valuable dialogue.

These were just some of the subjects discussed. Meeting other veterinary editors is certainly a learning process. Discussing the difficulties and solutions to these obstacles by other editors has given me a new insight of how to improve our journal.

Of course your support continues to be the basis of the journal. I continue to face the "chicken and egg" dilemma: Authors and especially those senior academic veterinarians prefer to publish in journals with a high citation index, however if they are not prepared to contribute even to a small extent to our Israeli Journal how can they expect the journal to meet their aspirations? The upgrading of our journal would reflect the high standard of veterinary medicine in Israel and be a pride and source of reference for future generations of Israeli veterinarians.

Again I appeal to those veterinarians, especially those senior veterinary researchers, who without sacrifice to their continued professional status, could easily submit at least one article a year to the IJVM and in this way contribute substantially to establish a journal of high standard.

Wishing all our readers a Happy, Healthy, Peaceful and Prosperous New Year
Hag Same'ach

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