With this issue of Heart, both authors and readers will see several changes with the transition to the new editorial team. Heart is an international journal of cardiovascular medicine; the top 10 countries of origin for original research submissions are the UK, Italy, USA, Netherlands, China, Germany, South Korea, Japan, Spain and Australia, but with a sizable number of contributions from other countries as well. This international reach of the journal is reflected in the composition of the new team of associate editors. In addition, the International Advisory Board will have periodic turnover to allow inclusion of a fresh and more diverse group of board members with the expectation that each will actively participate in setting journal goals and in reviewing several articles each year.

The focus of Heart is to keep cardiologists up to date with advances in the diagnosis and treatment of cardiovascular disease. The scope of topics covers the breadth of cardiovascular disease with special emphasis on valve disease, congenital heart disease and inherited cardiovascular conditions as well as coronary disease, heart failure, arrhythmias, imaging, epidemiology, global health, genomics and translational science. We hope to improve the care of patients with cardiovascular disease by publishing high-impact, innovative, clinically-relevant, original cardiovascular research.

In addition to publication of original research papers, our goals are to provide clinicians with the information needed for evidence-based patient care and to point researchers towards new areas of scientific inquiry. Structural changes in the journal include Heartbeat—a short overview of the contents of each issue that will highlight any key finding and new concepts. Editorials will be linked to original research articles to put the new data in context, supplemented by review articles that discuss recent advances or controversial topics in clinical and translational cardiovascular science. We hope to stimulate learning with Image Challenge—board review-type multiple choice questions based on an image or video followed by a detailed explanation of the answers. All types of visual information may be submitted with these questions including ECG, anatomic/tissue findings or pressure tracings, for example, in addition to diagnostic cardiovascular imaging studies. The JournalScan feature will be continued, summarising important papers published in other journals. Our Education in Heart series, under the leadership of Sarah Clarke, will provide a rigorous educational curriculum aligned with national and international educational competencies for training and practice as cardiovascular disease specialists.

Our commitment to authors who submit original research papers to Heart is to maintain the high quality and impact of the journal, as reflected in our impact factor of 5.014 for 2012. We also aim to shorten the time for the review process as much as possible while ensuring a thoughtful and fair review process, and to publish the final version of the article online quickly followed by the print version in a timely manner. We now have a close working relationship with Open Heart, a new open access online journal edited by Pascal Meier, which offers authors additional publication options and with our sister journal Heart Asia, edited by Michael CL Lim. Authors of articles that are reviewed but not selected for publication can choose to have the paper and reviews forwarded to one of those journals for expedited review. Submitted articles that do not meet the profile or priority for publication in Heart will be quickly returned, without review, so authors can move forward with consideration by Open Heart or Heart Asia or with submission to another journal.

Reviewers are a key element in the quality of a journal and I would like to thank all those whose work as reviewers has helped maintain the high quality of research articles published in Heart. The editorial team relies on your expertise and insight for determining which articles are of sufficient priority for publication in Heart and for helping authors present their research in the strongest and clearest way. We encourage peer reviewers to ensure their profile and areas of expertise are up to date. Your profile can be updated or you can create an account to be considered as a new peer reviewer at our website (http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/heart).

Heart benefits from being part of the BMJ family of journals, with the bmj.com website serving as a portal to worldwide access to articles and other features. We plan to increase the online and social media presence of Heart in several ways. Both readers and authors are encouraged to actively participate in scholarly interchange via e-letters to the editor which will be posted online along with the authors’ response. Selected e-letters will also be published in the print version of the journal. We encourage everyone to sign up to receive the Heart table of contents by email (eTOC) so that you know about new articles as they are published. Other online resources at bmj.com will be expanded including the twitter feed to alert readers to interesting articles, podcasts of interviews with authors, supplements to original research articles, video images and additional Image Challenge questions.

The journal Heart reflects the community of authors, reviewers and readers who contribute to the journal, as well as the curatorial efforts of the editorial team. We all share the goals of advancing science and improving patient care and we should work together towards these goals. On behalf of the new team of editors, I would like to express our desire to make Heart an even better, international platform for the highest-quality exchange about evidence for guiding management of patients with cardiovascular diseases.

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