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On closer inspection

For many readers of *Australian Family Physician*, what they first 'see' about *AFP* is 'up front' – with the latest Circulations Audit Board audit figures confirming, once again, that *AFP's* monthly circulation is over 40 000. For an increasing number of people, 'seeing' *AFP* is also via the internet, either by browsing a particular issue online or when using a search engine such as PubMed, from which there are, on average, over 9000 linkouts to the *AFP* website each month.

This increased visibility of *AFP* has contributed to an increase in submissions to *AFP*. While the number of submissions has increased by about 18% between 2006 and 2010, the growth in research submissions has been far more pronounced, increasing by about 40% in the same period. This is good news. Many of these submissions are from Australian primary healthcare researchers, although researchers from many professions and different countries also submit manuscripts to *AFP*. However, an increase in submissions poses challenges for a journal. In 2002–2004, 61% of research submissions to *AFP* were accepted.¹ Since then, there has been a decrease in the acceptance rate, with less than half of research submissions in 2010 making it to publication.

There are probably many reasons for this increase in the rate of submissions: there are direct factors such as *AFP* now has an impact factor, an Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) ranking of 'B', and the LinkOut® option from PubMed has allowed the international community to readily access *AFP*. There are probably also factors related to increasing research in primary care, including in Australia, leading to more manuscripts and more publications – although general practice still

has far fewer research publications than other specialties.²

Australian Family Physician continues to strive to publish research that is relevant to the needs of Australian general practitioners. The relevance and quality of the research in submissions remain the key criteria in editorial decision making, and in the peer review process. The *AFP* editorial team and Editorial Board have spent some time considering our response to this increase in the rate of submissions. It is felt that it is important to continue publishing articles that once accepted are published in a timely manner, without a large backlog of research waiting to be shared with our readership.

The first steps are now being taken to address this. To assist *AFP's* editors, reviewers will now be asked to specifically consider the relevance of a submission to the *AFP* readership. The other area that has been revised is the author guidelines, particularly relating to research articles. It has been noted that there are some types of research articles that have been less likely to succeed in being published in *AFP* – be it because of the research design or the relevance – or that they have regularly needed substantial revisions in order to be accepted for publication. To try to assist authors, more specific guidance is provided in these areas, which will allow authors to present their research in the best possible light. It is hoped that clearer guidance will help authors make informed decisions about submission, provide reviewers with quality manuscripts, and help editors make consistent decisions.

There are further steps that *AFP* plans to take over time that will help us to share with our readership, research that is relevant and important to them in their many roles as clinician, researcher, educator, practice team member and opinion leader.

Moving from the middle section of the journal

to up the front, where the focus section this month considers what we can easily see – the skin, including skin we may not immediately think about – hair and nails. The article by Morton Rawlin³ considers exanthems and drug reactions, common but potentially serious conditions. The article by Philip Clarke⁴ considers psoriasis – a common condition that is largely managed in general practice. Hair and nail conditions are also common and are discussed in the article by Paul Grinzi⁵; and the article by Catherine Drummond⁶ provides us with a framework for the assessment and management of common vulval dermatoses.

We hope you enjoy this issue of *AFP* – what you immediately see, and what you see as you look deeper.

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