

From the desk of the Editor-in-Chief

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We can be proud that European gynecologists have finally created their own surgical journal, *Gynecological Surgery*. This has been an initiative of visionary colleagues, such as Peter O'Donovan, and realized under the auspices of the European Society for Gynecological Endoscopy and other major European gynecological societies. *Gynecological Surgery* will cover all aspects of surgery in Obstetrics and Gynecology, ranging from surgical interventions for benign disease, infertility, oncology and urogynecological disorders to fetal and obstetrical surgery. The Journal will provide a forum to discuss and evaluate old and new surgical techniques, including open and vaginal surgery, laparoscopy, hysteroscopy, minimally invasive techniques and microsurgery, as well as new developments in surgical training, management and liability issues. It is with great enthusiasm that I have taken on the challenging role of Editor-in-Chief of *Gynecological Surgery*. In this role, I will be assisted by a selected team of Associate Editors, representing both the traditional as well as the newly developed sub-disciplines of our specialty.

There are many challenges ahead. Foremost, we have to increase the visibility of the Journal and try to establish *Gynecological Surgery* as the pre-eminent forum for all surgical discussion in Obstetrics and Gynecology. Over the next year or so, the Journal is likely to change in its presentation and content. Clinicians and scientists will be encouraged to choose *Gynecological Surgery* for publication of their original research articles, systematic reviews

and randomized controlled studies. While the value of case-reports and case series should not be underestimated, more emphasis will be given to update review articles and clinical opinion articles from leading authorities. In addition, efforts will be made to feature easy-to-read abstracts and high-quality illustrations and photographs that provide the reader with information at-a-glance.

The success of any journal is dependent on its standards of excellence. We will follow the code of conduct for editors of biomedical journals. The standards required are disseminated through the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE), whose website is a valuable source of guidance to authors (<http://www.publicationethics.org.uk/>). Transparency in scientific knowledge is beneficial to all concerned and a value worth fighting for. It is now generally accepted that research articles should not be influenced by hidden conflicts of interest. It is therefore logical to ask authors, reviewers and editors to declare potential conflicts of interest.

The quality of a journal also depends on how it manages the interests of authors and reviewers. There is currently much debate as to whether the traditional peer-review system should be replaced by an open system, which discloses the identity of the reviewer to the author. In a surgical journal, where a tendency may exist for (potential) authors, reviewers and readers alike to use sharp knives – metaphorically speaking – there may be a strong case for open peer-review process in that it would encourage reviewers to be more courteous and less inclined to torpedo a paper with subjective – and sometimes aggressive – arguments. For the time being, we will continue to use the traditional reviewing system, but it is the role of the Associate Editors to formulate a balanced opinion on submitted manuscripts and to assist the authors with constructive feed-back.

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Many contributions to *Gynecological Surgery* will be from countries where English is not the first language. Some authors, of otherwise excellent research manuscripts, perceive the requirement to publish in English as a disadvantage, and reviewers and readers alike may pay less attention to articles written in imperfect English. Non-native English-speaking authors may benefit from services available on the web, developed by graduate students from America's ten Top Research Universities, that provide support in editing research papers aimed for publication in

English language journals. More can be learned about this service at <http://www.journalexperts.com> – and we would be interested to learn about your experience.

As the field of gynecological surgery is expanding rapidly, *Gynecological Surgery* will provide an invaluable forum for the dissemination of new developments in surgical standards, approaches and technologies. The future of the Journal can be secured through a spirit of collaboration between authors, reviewers and editors that promotes the highest quality of research, something our speciality deserves.