

Dear colleagues, readers of Acta Gastro-Enterologica Belgica, researchers,

2008 may be considered as a rewarding and milestone year for our Journal for two reasons :

- most importantly, an impact factor of 1.096 was reached thanks to the work of our Editorial team and to the increasing quality of the original submissions to the Journal.
- Acta Gastroenterology Belgica is now again the official Journal of both the French and the Flemish speaking societies of Gastro-enterology : SRBGE (Société Royale Belge de Gastroentérologie) and the VVGE (Vlaamse Vereniging voor Gastro-enterologie)

Short history of the Acta Gastro-Enterologica Belgica : one of the oldest Journals published in Gastroenterology

The development of Gastroenterology in Belgium and abroad has been greatly stimulated by Georges Brohée (1887-1957) who founded the “Société Belge de Gastro-entérologie” in 1928 and its Journal “Le Journal belge de gastro-entérologie” in 1933 (1,2). The Journal was named “Acta Gastro-Enterologica Belgica” in 1946, as all Belgian Scientific Societies united into the ASSMB (Associations des Sociétés Scientifiques Médicales Belges) had decided to name their respective Journals as “Acta”.

In 1982 the Société Belge de Gastro-entérologie became the Société Royale Belge de Gastro-entérologie (SRBGE), the term “Royale” indeed given to associations older than 50 years.

The Acta Gastro-Enterologica Belgica underwent further changes with peer reviewing by at least two experts of every original submission in 1984, changes in appearance with A4 format in 1996 and English as the language of publication for all papers since 1993. A website was created in 2003 with more than 21150 visitors to date. The collaboration with ASSMB was stopped in 2007 and our Editorial office took over the relationship with libraries and overseas exchanges. In 2008, new statutes were written to reunite the two French and Dutch speaking Belgian Societies of Gastroenterology in a single board. They will be implemented in 2009 with a new Editorial Board associating the 2 Societies.

The Editors-in-Chief since its foundation were :

1946-1957	Georges Brohée
1957-1980	R. Le Cluyse
1981-1985	André Dony
1986-1990	René Fiasse
1991-1995	André Van Gossum
1996-2001	Jean Henrion
2002-2005	Olivier Le Moine
2005-2009	Pierre Deprez

Summary of the era 2005-2009 : increased volume of submissions, decreased lead-times, increased IF

The new elected Editorial Board, Peter Michielsen and I as Deputy Editor and Editor in Chief, respectively, were pleased to take over the Editorial Board in 2005 for a term of 4 years, with the stimulating mission to continue the progressive metamorphosis of Acta Gastro-Enterologica

Belgica into an international Journal with an impact factor sufficient to stimulate its growth.

Although we had to deal with a significant increase of the number of papers submitted to Acta Gastro-Enterologica Belgica, we managed to decrease the delay between submission and publication. The original submissions now exceed 170 (an increase of more than 30% since 2005 : 60 original manuscripts, 90 case reports, 20 letters, plus reviews). The mean lead-time between submission and editorial decision decreased from 200 days in 2004 to 75 days in 2008 for Original Manuscripts and from 165 to 65 days for Case Reports. We would like to thank our Editorial Office secretaries (Christel and Steve Martin and more recently Mia Persoons) for their huge efforts to achieve this performance! Acta Gastro-Enterologica, which is covered by the Excerpta Medica database (EMBASE) since 1990 and therefore appears in Current Contents, Medline researches, and PubMed, becomes therefore more attractive for publication.

We receive many contributions from countries outside Europe, especially the middle East, Africa and Asia. These submissions are very welcome because they bring new ideas in the field of Gastroenterology, but their “uneven” English spelling means more work for our reviewers and editors. The acceptance rate for original articles is now 16% for Original Manuscripts, 21% for Case Reports and 35% for Reviews, underlining the quality and strength of the reviewers and the Editorial Board.

We would like to deeply congratulate and thank the Associate Editors and all the reviewers who contributed to the selection of the papers (the list of all reviewers can be found at the end of this issue). This means that the quality of the Journal is guaranteed through their efforts. Besides, we also want to thank Belgian experts in the field of Gastroenterology and Hepatology who organized outstanding meetings and symposia on special subjects. In addition to the hard administrative work inherent to this kind of organization, they were able to collect and manage manuscripts from internationally renowned experts for publication in Acta Gastro-Enterologica Belgica.

Peter Michielsen and I were very happy to be rewarded for our dedication to the Journal by a steady increase of the impact factor now reaching what we aimed at : IF of 1.096 (cites to recent articles, 137 and number of articles published in 2005-2006, 125). We hope this will further increase the quality of the submissions to our Journal and stimulate young researchers and confirmed experts to submit their original data to Acta Gastro-Enterologica Belgica.

We certainly remain open to any suggestions of our readers and we are ready to collaborate with any Scientific Society or National Society to increase the attractiveness of our Journal.

We wish you a happy and successful year 2009.

Pierre Deprez, Editor-in-chief

Peter Michielsen, Deputy Editor

References

1. STANDAERT L.O. History of the ASBEMGE. *Gastroenterol. Intern.*, 1993, **6** : 180-185.
2. FIASSE R. Histoire de la Société Royale Belge de Gastro-entérologie. In website : www.srbge.be click “About us” then “History”. 2006.