The “New” JASN

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Readers with sharp eyes will notice before getting beyond the cover that this issue of JASN differs in more than just its content from the journal you have become accustomed to reading for the past several years. This issue marks the first issue of JASN “self-published” by the American Society of Nephrology (ASN) independent of our previous publisher, Lippincott Williams & Wilkins, to whom we bid a fond farewell last month (1).

Self-publication significantly enriches the opportunities to be more creative with JASN. The editorial staff has been hard at work for a year preparing for this issue and brainstorming ideas to capitalize on this opportunity to enhance the journal for our readers without sacrificing any of JASN’s traditional scientific excellence. This issue debuts some of those ideas.

First, some cosmetic changes. You will note that our name on the front cover has been changed from the old Journal of the American Society of Nephrology to the sprightlier JASN. This change acknowledges that the journal, now in its 15th year of existence, has indeed established itself as JASN, an identity that seems to us more in accordance with the journal’s status and recognition as an independent entity that is not just the organ of the society that owns it. The cover design and photo also are different, more streamlined, while retaining the traditional JASN maroon that distinguishes us from others on the library display table. The inside font and formatting also are subtly different in ways designed to optimize space utilization and enhance readability, and we plan to add a professional medical illustration component to some of our invited articles in the future.

More important than the cosmetic changes, however, are the new features that debut in this issue. “Nephrology beyond JASN” is edited by one of our veteran Associate Editors and contributors to the journal, Dr. Eberhard Ritz of Heidelberg, who will peruse the literature each month to bring you a brief synopsis of two or three papers from outside the renal field accompanied by an analysis of their importance to nephrology. The first Nephrology beyond JASN comes just after Highlights in our Table of Contents, as it will each month, and reviews three interesting papers: one from Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences on renal protective effects of erythropoietin that are not related to hematopoiesis, one from Nature Medicine on protective effects of vasopressin antagonists in polycystic kidney disease, and one from Science on the potential role of toll-like receptors in determining susceptibility to urinary tract infections.

This issue also features the first “Fast Track” paper, a study from the University of Colorado that documents an apparent role for rapamycin in slowing progression in polycystic kidney disease. Fast Track papers are shorter and more rapidly reviewed and serve not only to give authors access to rapid publication of their best results but also to help readers appreciate what our editorial staff and reviewers believe is particularly “hot” among the many papers submitted to JASN for consideration (2). Instructions for submitting papers to Fast Track appear in the Instructions to Authors on our web site (www.jasn.org).

The evolution to self-publication is an important step in JASN’s maturation as a journal and in the ASN’s commitment to provide the best possible product to its members and to the greater nephrology community. The “new” JASN that you are now reading, including the additional features described above, reflects the combined efforts of the editorial staff and the ASN Publications Office to meet that goal. As always, we welcome your comments and suggestions.

References