

The Journal of Pathology: Clinical Research. A new step in the evolution of publishing in pathology

Peter Hall, *Editor in Chief* and Simon Herrington, *Deputy Editor*

Evolution is perhaps the only constant in biology [1] and nothing makes sense in biology without evolution. Although Julian Huxley may have made a similar statement Dobzhansky is credited with the first clear use of this phrase. Of course the notion of evolution and the effects of selective pressure go far beyond biology and permeate every aspect of our world and our existence. Evolution is a feature of every walk of life. Nothing stays still. Change is a constant. This is apparent even in the world of scientific publishing. The *Journal of Pathology* has become the leading research pathology journal with enviable impact factor, turnaround times and a worldwide reputation for excellence. It is evolving and a new Journal, **The Journal of Pathology: Clinical Research (onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1002/(ISSN)2056-4538)** has just been launched.

The *Journal of Pathology and Bacteriology* began as a small journal launched by German Sims-Woodhead in 1892 [2]. The very first issue has papers by the Victorian greats of pathology including Virchow and Metchnikoff. The entire archive is available ([onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1002/\(ISSN\)1096-9896/issues](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1002/(ISSN)1096-9896/issues)) and we would encourage readers to explore the manifold and diverse papers. It later became the official journal of the Pathological Society of Great Britain and Ireland and grew to become one of the foremost Journals in pathology. In the 1960s developments in microbiology led to the first significant speciation event in the evolution of the Journal with the formation in 1968 of the *Journal of Medical Microbiology* and a major title change: The *Journal of Pathology and Bacteriology* became *The Journal of Pathology* [3].

The development of the *Journal of Pathology* in the next decade was slow and there were some stumblings on this trajectory [2]. An earlier Publisher had significant problems with issues published in the wrong order and significant other production issues. The link with John Wiley and Sons (now Wiley Blackwell) began in 1982 and this has been a strong synergy. The first editor in this era was Dennis Wright (Editor 1983 – 1994) and he was followed by Peter Toner (Editor 1994 – 2002). With their efforts development was steady and by the mid 1990s its distinctive appearance

(the red journal a feature going back several decades) had a burgeoning international profile.

During Peter Toner's tenure as Editor an important event occurred. In the fall of 2000 a meeting of the Editorial Board, representatives of the Publishers and the Committee of the Pathological Society paved the way for a new millennium. A new Editorial structure was proposed along with a move to Online submissions. Simon Herrington built on this new foundation when he became Editor in Chief in 2002. Soon after, a rebranding exercise for the Society and Journal introduced the focus on *Understanding Disease* that has become the central tenet of Editorial decisions ever since. Since then the focus of the *Journal of Pathology* has been mechanistic insights into disease processes. Peter Hall became Editor in Chief in 2007 and, with an increasingly international Editorial team and perspective, the *Journal of Pathology* has become the leading research orientated pathology journal (see Figure 1).

In the past 5 years there has been a dramatic rise in submissions and the quality of papers published continues to rise. This brings with it problems. The sheer number of submissions means that the editorial team regularly turns away very good material. The internal review processes are stringent and many of the papers turned away are at the more clinical end of the spectrum of investigative papers. Another problem is that the very nature of the *Journal of Pathology*, with its focus on studies of a mechanistic nature, means that the membership of the Pathological Society, and many other readers, whose focus is clinical practice, feel somewhat 'disenfranchised'. These factors represent selective pressures that force the Journal to evolve. A new speciation event is needed!

Over the last 2 years and with this background in mind, we have explored the possibility of a more clinically orientated companion journal to the *Journal of Pathology* that will retain all of its qualities: its rigour and attention to detail; its speedy and robust review processes; its international perspective; its experienced editorial team; and its commitment to excellence. Despite the challenging economic environment, the Publishers and the Pathological Society have embraced this idea and a new title is being launched: *The Journal of Pathology: Clinical Research*.

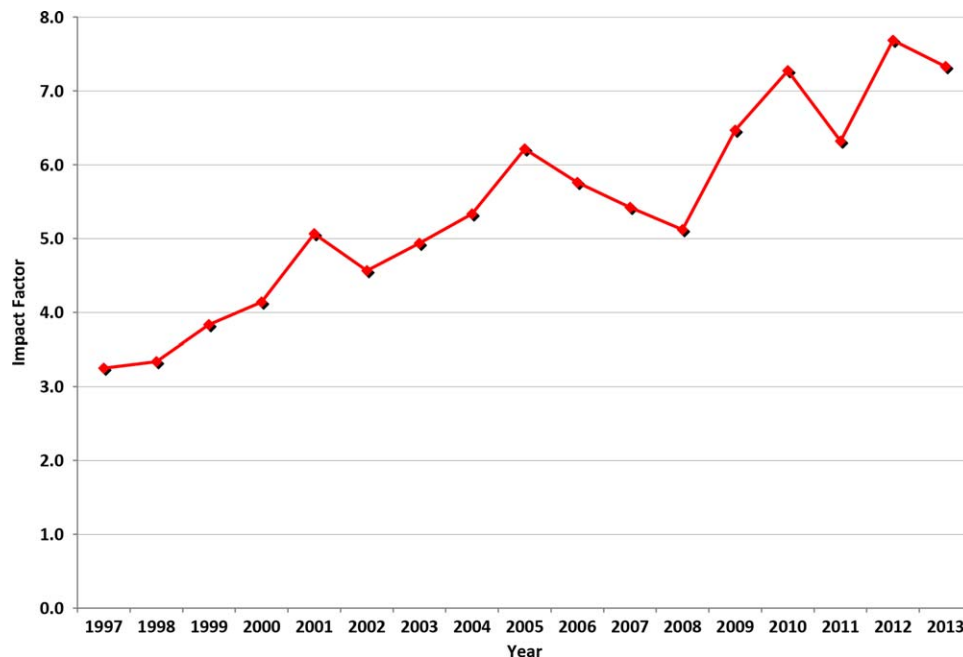


Figure 1. The sustained rise of the Impact Factor of the *Journal of Pathology* 1997 to 2013.

The new title will have the same Editor in Chief (Peter Hall) as the *Journal of Pathology* and the two journals will share a Deputy Editor (Simon Herrington). Associate Editors will be appointed in the near future. The new journal will be wholly Open Access and online only. The Author guidelines and core policies and procedures of the two journals will be common. While they will have separate websites and Online submission processes, there will be close links and the potential for manuscripts to be moved seamlessly between the titles. Both journals will share a commitment to serving as translational bridges between basic biomedical science and clinical medicine with particular emphasis on, but not restricted to, tissue based studies. Where they differ is in their focus. The *Journal of Pathology* will retain its focus on **Understanding Disease** and a primary interest in mechanistic studies. In contrast the focus of the *The Journal of Pathology: Clinical Research* is the publication of studies that illuminate the clinical relevance of research in the broad area of the study of disease. For example appropriately powered and validated studies with novel diagnostic, prognostic and predictive significance, and biomarker discovery and validation, will be welcomed, whereas they had previously not been suited to the *Journal of Pathology*. We recognise that there is over-

lap between the titles since some studies cannot be easily categorised. However, as a guide, if the **main focus** of a study is mechanistic then it will be more suited to the *Journal of Pathology*. Conversely, if the **main focus** of a study is **Clinical Research** then it will be more suited to the *The Journal of Pathology: Clinical Research*. The Editorial team will of course work with authors to ensure that manuscripts are placed in the most appropriate title.

The launch of the *The Journal of Pathology: Clinical Research* is another step in the evolution of the *Journal of Pathology*. We are sure it will be successful.

References

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