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Launched in 1948 with 2200 subscribers, Pediatrics is now received monthly by more than 60,000 direct subscribers from around the world. A total of 20,000 to 30,000 additional readers receive foreign-language translations regularly, and the Internet extension of the Journal receives 20,000 individual visitors each month. This type of growth over the past 50 years has made Pediatrics the leading pediatric journal in the world. As it has grown, Pediatrics has had several notable firsts, including being the first medical journal published on CD-ROM and the first established pediatric journal to publish original articles on the Internet. And, as this special supplement shows, many landmark articles were published first in Pediatrics.

Surveys of the readership of Pediatrics over the years have found that American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) statements, as well as letters to the editor, are valuable parts of the journal. Therefore, some of the AAP’s main public pronouncements have been made first in Pediatrics, including the recent statement on positioning the sleeping infant on its back, which has contributed to a significant decline in the incidence of sudden infant death syndrome.1

In the years since its inception, Pediatrics has served a number of functions for the AAP and its membership. In addition to providing an excellent and respected forum for the publication and discussion of pediatric research and clinical experience, Pediatrics has been, aside from membership dues themselves, the most consistent and significant source of income for the AAP over the past 50 years. This income, of which advertising revenues remain a primary portion, helps to defray many member expenses and, perhaps most importantly, fund many important AAP initiatives, including research projects, advocacy programs, educational activities, community outreach efforts, and other activities prescribed by the AAP’s mission. In short, the growth of the Journal and the growth of the AAP are, in many ways, directly linked.

MEASUREMENTS OF THE GROWTH OF PEDIATRICS

The initial circulation of Pediatrics was small, approximately 2200, and was almost entirely composed of members of the AAP. Detailed circulation figures from these early years have been either lost or destroyed. The oldest extant records, from 1979, are imprecise, but show a circulation of approximately 30,000. By 1991, circulation had reached 49,377. Currently (as of February 1998), the circulation of Pediatrics is just over 60,000 total copies. More than 10,000 of these subscribers are nonmembers of the AAP.

Of course, there have been other ways in which Pediatrics, like other journals, has expanded. The most obvious way in which a journal can expand is in its physical size. From 1948 to 1973, the journal maintained a final bound size (called “trim size” in printing jargon) of 6.75” × 10.375”. In 1974, the trim size of Pediatrics increased to 8.25” × 11”, an increase in sheer surface area of ~23%. In 1992, the Journal’s trim size shrunk slightly, ~0.15” in both width and height, to allow for more economical production and mailing. Page count for each volume (six issues) published from 1948 to 1992 remained relatively stable, at approximately 1000 pages per volume. Currently, Pediatrics is publishing approximately 1100 print pages per volume and, with the additional papers published on Pediatrics electronic pages, the Internet section of the Journal, the total average page count per volume now exceeds 1700. Compared with just 2 years ago (1996), Pediatrics now is publishing ~70% more article pages per volume.

Another metric that bears examination is the number of papers received and the Journal’s rate of accepting manuscript submissions. In 1948, the journal received 290 original articles for publication, and accepted ~60% of these. The number of submissions apparently dropped in the initial years of the Journal, with records indicating that in 1956, only 236 original articles were submitted, and 62% accepted. However, at the time, this state of affairs was characterized by the editors as “very wholesome,” which likely reflects the general state of affairs for similar specialty journals. By 1967, the journal was receiving approximately 540 original articles for publication, and accepting 45%. The divergence between manuscripts submitted (increasing) and acceptance rate (decreasing) continued, with 937 manuscripts submitted in 1980 and 24% accepted. In 1997, Pediatrics received 1440 original articles for publication, and accepted 18% of these.

Pediatrics also has experienced a type of growth noted elsewhere in the literature: the increasing number of authors per article. This subject has been a topic of some debate over the past decade. A 1995 study of the papers submitted to the meetings (1959 to 1994) of the Society for Pediatric Radiology found...
that the number of authors per paper grew from 1.0 in 1959 to 1.7 in the period from 1960 to 1964, to 4.1 for the period from 1990 to 1994. A 1993 article in the British Medical Journal found a median of six to seven authors in medical journals during the period from 1982 to 1992. Our sampling of Pediatrics issues from previous years has revealed that authorship in Pediatrics has mirrored this trend somewhat, increasing from an average of 2.21 authors per paper in 1949 to an average of 4.68 authors per paper in 1997. The trend appears to have been consistent and gradual, with no obvious or dramatic increases noted among any of our 10 sample years.

Finally, the editorial board of Pediatrics has also grown, from an initial 11 members in 1948 to a current roster of 28 members. The Journal currently relies on more than 2500 peer reviewers every year to provide 2 to 3 peer reviewers per article reviewed.

INTERNATIONAL EXPANSION OF PEDIATRICS

Since 1975, selected articles from Pediatrics have been translated and published by leading international organizations devoted to the dissemination of medical information. The first international edition of Pediatrics appeared in 1975 and was published, as it is today, by the prestigious scientific and medical publishing house Ediciones Doyma, of Barcelona, Spain. Selected articles are translated from the original English version into Spanish and distributed with advertising on a monthly basis. Doyma publishes 10 issues per year, and the AAP receives royalties on a percentage of advertising and subscription income.

After the successful collaboration between the AAP and Ediciones Doyma for the publishing of the Spanish edition, the AAP was approached by individuals from an Italian medical publisher, Editrice CSH, as well as by members of a contingent from India who represent the Manipal College Trust and were concerned about poor distribution of medical literature in that part of the world. Meetings between these two groups and the AAP resulted in the development of the Italian language edition of Pediatrics and a special English-language edition of Pediatrics published and printed in India. These two international editions first appeared in 1989. Both the Italian and the Indian editions are published six times per year (with article selections taken from the most current 12 issues of the English version), and both now include Pediatrics in Review as a supplement.

The Portuguese edition of Pediatrics has been published since 1992 by Farmapress LDA in Lisbon. In 1995, they began publication of the Brazilian edition in Portuguese. These are separate editions and do not contain the same selected articles from the English version. Both are published six times per year.

The Arab World edition of Pediatrics began in 1993 after discussions between Jerold Lucey, MD, editor of Pediatrics, and Yousef Abu-Osba, MD, who, at that time was chief of pediatrics at King Faisal Hospital in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The Arab World edition is now published by the Aram Publishing House in Amman, Jordan, with which Dr Abu-Osba is affiliated.

All of the international editions of Pediatrics have begun after the AAP is satisfied that the local and regional pediatric societies of the host countries approve the venture and, in ideal situations, have members who are willing to sit on the editorial boards of the international editions.

In March 1998, a Russian-language edition of Pediatrics began publication. The publisher, Goldstein and Associates, is an American commercial publishing company that also publishes other clinical medicine journals in English. The text of the Russian edition is completely translated into Russian, with terms and phrases that do not translate effectively included parenthetically in English.

PEDIATRICS ON THE WORLD WIDE WEB (WEB)

On January 6, 1997, the Internet extension of the Journal, Pediatrics electronic pages, debuted on the Web. Within hours, as the site’s presence became part of this global network’s dynamic and self-aware architecture, new, peer-reviewed research articles became available around the world under the auspices of Pediatrics. Every month, approximately 12 original, peer-reviewed research articles have been published on the Web and abstracted in the print journal. Internationally, the research presented in this section of Pediatrics has achieved a new level of visibility. Also, the Journal has been able to offer its readers expanded services using the Web, including free e-mail announcements about upcoming and new issues, links to other resources, on-line subscription ordering, search tools, and an on-line book review service.

The Web’s very nature offers intriguing publishing possibilities, with hypertext links to Medline and other Web sites, unique search tools, and e-mail capabilities. Placing a new section of Pediatrics on-line was an opportunity for the AAP and its journal to offer high-quality, peer-reviewed material via the Web, giving practitioners more of a reason to explore the Web and its offerings while also setting a high standard for the type of pediatric research on the Internet.

Every week, visitors from more than 60 countries use the site. We have received orders over the Web for the print journal from 17 countries including Croatia, India, South Africa, Turkey, Holland, Argentina, French Polynesia, Hong Kong, and Australia.

On a visit to Hong Kong to attend a meeting of the Asian Pediatric Society, the attendees saw firsthand the impact the Journal’s Web site was having internationally. At a well-attended session, the Burmese Pediatric Association demonstrated the site, and their speaker was able to summarize every paper that had appeared in Pediatrics electronic pages to date. That the information from current issues already had been read and assimilated was very striking, because, on average, it takes 3 to 4 months for the print edition to reach Burmese readers, if it reaches them at all. Over the Web, however, the members of the Burmese Pediatric Society were able to read, download, and print the information within minutes of its publication. It’s clear that information on the Web is.
both vital and personal for many pediatricians globally.

The AAP also has been able to enhance access to Pediatrics for international users of the Web. In June 1997, we agreed to participate in a pilot project of an Internet service in Hawaii. The company, Digital Island (http://www.digisle.net), uses vacant fiber-optic lines between Hawaii and major access points on other continents to provide single-hop service to countries around the world. Digital Island has a copy of our site on their server in Hawaii, an arrangement known as a mirror server. Now, users in more than a dozen countries can access Pediatrics on the Web at http://intl.pediatrics.org and connect directly to our mirror server in Hawaii, without having to make multiple connections through other nations or encountering traffic from the US public Internet. We have noticed that users in those nations receiving this enhanced service are accessing the site more regularly than they were before the enhancement, and that activity on this version of the site is growing.

In the fall of 1998, a historical effort undertaken in conjunction with the Journal’s 50th anniversary will be completed. Known as The Pediatrics Legacy Data Project, this initiative’s goal is to place the citations and abstracts of the Journal’s complete history on the Web, in a searchable format. Previously, only materials from 1974 to the present had been available through Medline. Using this comprehensive archive, researchers will have a more complete picture of the scope of pediatric research over the past 50 years, and it will be accessible worldwide.

This month—July 1998—the full text of Pediatrics will be available on the Web, allowing subscribers to search and retrieve articles from January 1997 onward and making the Journal’s full complement of research available around the world. Subscribers will receive free access to the site along with their paid subscription to Pediatrics. Others who do not subscribe can receive limited access to the site for a nominal fee. Abstracts and lists of contents will be available freely.

We are enthusiastic about the possibilities inherent in offering the full text of Pediatrics on the Web. It is one of the next steps in the growth of the specialty around the world.

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*Pediatrics* 1998;102;194

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