

Editorials

Passing the Baton: A New Editor-in-Chief and a New Challenge

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In January 2006, *Environmental Science and Pollution Research* will begin its 13th year of publication. It will also be my time to pass the baton of Editor-in-Chief to an individual who I believe will continue to advance the principles that have been essential to making ESPR a high quality international journal with a focus on chemical pollutants and the associated sciences. I have asked Alvin L. Young to assume the responsibilities and activities of the Editor-in-Chief. He comes well qualified and prepared for the task.

Dr. Young received his Ph.D. from Kansas State University in 1968 in the emerging area of environmental toxicology. He was one of the earliest researchers to evaluate the persistence, environmental fate, and human risk of 2,3,7,8-TCDD. His career has spanned 36 years as a scientist, science advisor, and scientific director in five different Federal agencies in the United States, and included academic positions in three universities. He has authored four books and more than 200 research articles on topics related to toxicology, environmental fate of chemicals, human epidemiology, nutrition, genetically modified organisms, radiation, and public policy. He has been an advocate and practitioner of communicating science and risk assessment to the public. He has served on the ESPR Editorial Board since the beginning of the journal (1994), and as a Co-editor for the past two years. He has published more than 30 articles in ESPR. He is currently a Visiting Professor with the Institute for Science and Public Policy, the University of Oklahoma.

As I pass the baton of Editor-in-Chief to Dr. Young, I would like to reflect upon the history and accomplishments of the journal, and what I believe is the future of ESPR. When I launched ESPR as scientific journal, I hoped it would become a medium of communication with both a truly international and interdisciplinary outlook [1, see also p. 317]. I recognized that pollutants and other environmental problems do not stop at political borders. Thus, I envisioned a global network of regional editors representing a variety of disciplines who would ensure up-to-date information and reports on environmental problems, especially those with issues related to chemical pollutants. As the journal has evolved, I have not been disappointed in my expectations.

An examination of our Editorial Board on our website (<http://www.scientificjournals.com/sj/espr>) confirms the international and interdisciplinary approach of the Board. These men and women have dedicated many hours of their time in serving roles as peer reviewers (referees) for the journal.

Many routinely submit Workshop or Conference Reports, and some frequently submit research manuscripts. Moreover, our Co-editors have recently evaluated the journal in their article on 'ESPR – A Journal for our Time' [2]. They highlighted the interdisciplinary nature and originality of contributions of ESPR. Indeed, one of the important contributions of the journal is the willingness to address controversial issues in environmental science. For example, the journal has published a number of outstanding papers and a special issue related to atmospheric diagnostics and the long-range transport of persistent organic pollutants [3–6]. Over the last 12 years, the journal has consistently taken the initiative to publish state of the art information on polychlorinated dibenzo-*p*-dioxins and dibenzofurans [7–10], and on the integration of environmental data into risk and hazard assessments [11–14]. The journal has also given attention to the use of microorganisms and plants to remove toxic materials from soil [15–18]. More recently, the journal has published an increasing number of articles on biotechnology and the use of genetically modified organisms [19–23]. Although ESPR does not publish medical articles, *per se*, it does publish scientific data on human exposure. For example, occupational exposure to organochlorine compounds [24], mass-spectrometric patterns of carbon compounds in smoker's lung *in-situ* [25], an update and reflections on exposures following the Chernobyl accident [26], and, assessments of exposure to Agent Orange in Viet Nam [27,28].

Why do authors submit such outstanding manuscripts to ESPR? The journal is not published by a scientific society, e.g., the American Chemical Society, or the Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry. I believe it has to do with a number of factors:

- The international approach in combination with the English language, the 'Lingua Romana' of the modern scientific community;
- the standards we have set for the journal by publishing quality research papers whose originality is subjected to a rigorous peer review process;
- the timeliness (most within 90 days) in publishing the approved manuscripts; the encouragement that we as editors give to young researchers and researchers in developing countries and emerging nations, such as Egypt, Iran, and Brazil [29–31];
- the perception given by these researchers of the journal's acceptance and distribution;
- the impact factor of the journal;

- and lastly, the journal publishes, in addition to the strictly scientific papers, topical communications, such as letters to the editor, book reviews, reports on conferences, workshops, and policy and legislative issues within the European Union, the United States, and other countries [32,33]. This extensive *modus operandi* and its diversity of environmental publications have been the major reasons why ESPR is now the Official Organ of the 'European Association for Chemical and Molecular Sciences – EuCheMS' (the former Federation of European Chemical Societies – FECS), Division for Chemistry and the Environment.

In reference to the efforts we make with young researchers and researchers in developing countries, I have been very pleased with the initiation of Subject Editors who track the state-of-the-art in research progress in China. The 'Golden Age of Science' can be seen in the laboratories and universities in China, and ESPR is privileged to be publishing many of its outstanding environmental research papers [34–36]. It is important that ESPR continues to encourage contributions from scientists and research teams in countries, for example in Eastern Europe, that have less well-established infrastructures in the environmental sciences than we in Western Europe, the United States, or Japan enjoy. Pollution is a global problem and will not be solved without parallel development of research. ESPR has promoted excellence, but not elitism [2].

As noted in the co-editors editorial on ESPR, there is still need for improvements [2]. We must continue to emphasize the journal's rigorous refereeing procedures by inviting top environmental scientists to contribute their expertise in the peer-review process. We must ensure that regulatory and editorial views are expressed as freely as possible of political influence, and that there is a broad approach to environmental sciences by soliciting articles, reviews, and reports; be they from academic, research institutions, industry, consulting laboratories, or from government agencies. Lastly, we as environmental scientists have a responsibility to identify the future environmental topic areas, which are not being adequately researched or adequately supported by either innovative investigators or funding [37–39]. Hence, our recent series of editorials titled 'Environmental Science – Quo vadis?'

I want to thank all my fellow colleagues who have helped to establish ESPR, and who have contributed their ideas and their time and efforts to ensuring its success. May the future continue to be bright for this truly international and interdisciplinary journal.

The articles listed here reflect only a small section of the thematic scope of ESPR. There are, for example, the important areas of biotests as well as of remediation, explosives and wetlands, which are represented by many papers. It would exceed the scope of this editorial to completely cover the range of subject areas which build the scientific base of ESPR.

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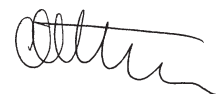
Rapid advances in industrialization and technology during the last decades, together with changes in agricultural practices, have brought not only advantages for many areas of human endeavour, but have also created potentially devastating problems for our environment and health. Depletion of stratospheric ozone, acid rain, toxic chemicals, waste issues, and global warming are just some of the problems we now recognize.

Pollutants and other environmental problems do not stop at political borders. Without exaggeration it can be stated that no activity affecting the environment in one country is insignificant for another. Even in the age of intensified travel, telecommunication and computers, information exchange on environmental issues between different political entities and geographical areas is woefully lacking. Such exchange, however, is imperative to detect, understand and measure problems, and, eventually, evaluate, regulate, change and control them.

Our new publication is conceived as a scientific journal. It is being launched as medium of communication and information with both a truly international and interdisciplinary outlook.

Through a global network of regional editors representing a variety of disciplines, we will assure up-to-date information and reports from all relevant fields. Although the journal is open to discussing any type of environmental problem, emphasis will be on issues related to chemical pollutants. Topics such as chemical analysis, environmental fate, toxicology and health issues, ecotoxicology, technological aspects, risk evaluation and regulatory aspects will be featured.

We believe the time to be right for this publication. I like to thank all colleagues who have helped this concept to evolve and have contributed their ideas.



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