

## Editorial

# The AALAS Journals: 2009 in Review

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The November issue of *Journal of the American Association for Laboratory Animal Science (JAALAS)* volume 48 and the December issue of *Comparative Medicine* volume 59 bring to an end the fourth full year of reorganization of the AALAS journals. Our sincere thanks go to the talented support we receive from art director Amy Tippet and scientific editor Amy Frazier, as well as to the AALAS staff, Melissa Bagaglio and John Farrar, who together continue to maintain a sustained and timely flow of well-edited and presented information through the process from submission to publication.

A particularly important accomplishment this year was the publication of Competing Interests Policy for editors, authors, and reviewers. In addition, we have continued during the past year to define and differentiate the content of the two journals. Our main current emphasis is the broad category of infectious diseases, which are classified as emphasizing as experimental models and naturally occurring disease, which are assigned to *Comparative Medicine*, or quality control and health surveillance, which are assigned to *JAALAS*. For some articles, this distinction is difficult. Key differentiating features are whether the article is

**Table 1.** Journal statistics

JAALAS	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Total submissions	65	62	82	62	60	98	68	119	132	172
International	-	-	-	-	-	-	24	31	52	61
% international	-	-	-	-	-	-	35	26	39	35
Disposition										
Referred to CM	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	4	11	15
Reviewed for JAALAS							65	115	121	157
Rejected	6	5	7	4	8	26	24	37	35	41
Withdrawn	1	2	0	3	3	10	3	7	6	4
Accepted	58	55	75	55	49	62	41	61	73	93
Total accepted and rejected*	64	60	82	59	57	88	65	98	108	134
% accepted	91	92	91	93	86	70	63	62	68	69
Time from submission to										
first decision (days)	35	34	32	34	32	34	28	32	28	28
acceptance (days)	-	-	-	-	-	-	50	55	66	64
Articles published **	53	60	61	68	44	63	62	65	62	68
Pages published	-	-	-	-	-	-	812	756	732	840
CM										
Total submissions	121	117	110	115	99	104	83	136	126	158
International	41	45	17	37	28	39	35	42	50	86
% international	34	38	15	32	28	38	42	31	40	54
Disposition										
Referred to JAALAS	14	10	7	9	5	29	18	27	24	39
Rejected	31	15	16	14	16	18	20	34	37	51
Withdrawn	1	10	5	6	12	4	1	7	8	6
Accepted	75	82	82	86	66	53	44	57	56	47
Total accepted and rejected*	106	97	98	100	82	71	64	91	93	98
% accepted	71	85	84	86	81	75	69	63	60	48
Time from submission to										
first decision (days)	-	28	28	28	28	40	49	40	32	28
acceptance (days)	-	95	99	101	108	78	95	66	62	53
Articles published **	91	63	60	77	76	62	45	63	63	59
Pages published	704	488	601	696	744	560	452	614	623	613

\*, some articles submitted in 2009 are still under review

\*\*, some of the articles published in 2009 were accepted in 2008

**Table 2.** Species focus and types of articles published in 2009

JAALAS	Species	Number		Types of articles	Number	
		2008	2009		2008	2009
	Mice	25	18	Biology	32	38
	NHP	13	10	Management	11	3
	Rats	11	14	Experimental techniques	7	14
	Rabbits	3	4	Overview (other)	0	3
	Swine	0	3	Case reports	11	11
	Reptiles	1	1			
	Amphibians	3	2			
	Fish	1	2			
	Other	4	12*			
	None	0	3			
Totals		61	69		61	69

  

CM	Species	Number		Types of articles	Number	
		2008	2009		2008	2009
	Mice	19	21	Overviews	13	5
	NHP	16	9	Original research	46	50
	Rats	7	9	Case studies	4	4
	Rabbits	5	4			
	Swine	5	4			
	Dogs	2	7			
	Other	7	5**			
Totals		63	59		63	59

\*, 6 articles on both rats and mice, 3 on miscellaneous rodents, and 1 each on dog, cat, and ferret

\*\* , 1 article each on mole rats, ferrets, fish, hamsters, and multiple species

primarily descriptive versus hypothesis based, or basic science versus applied science.

Perhaps the greatest change in journal statistics during the past year has been the marked increase in the number of articles submitted (Table 1). In *CM*, approximately half of the submitted articles are from authors and institutions outside the US, whereas in *JAALAS* 35% of the submitted articles are international. Thus, the journals are gaining in recognition worldwide. Because the number of articles published per year has not changed markedly (the target remains 10 articles per issue), the greater number of submissions allows greater selectivity in terms of the material accepted for publication. Thus, acceptance rates are now under 70% for *JAALAS* and under 50% for *CM*. We continue to anticipate that over time, increasing numbers of submissions and rising standards of acceptability for publication will raise the impact factors, increase the appeal of the journals to scientists, and result in even greater numbers of high quality submissions. Prospective authors should therefore anticipate that the bar for acceptable submissions will rise in the future.

With regard to species, fewer articles were published in *CM* in 2009 with a focus on nonhuman primates (NHPs) fell. This decrease was due to the high number of NHP articles in 2008 in a special issue focused exclusively on infectious diseases of NHPs. In *JAALAS*, fewer articles were published on mice in 2009, whereas greater numbers of articles were published on less commonly used species.

Specific topics that were heavily represented in *JAALAS*, (that is, topics represented by 4 or more articles during the year based on evaluation of the topic index in the last issue of 2008) were

**Table 3.** Most heavily represented topics (4 or more articles)

	2008	2009
JAALAS	Anesthesia	Anesthesia
	Enrichment	Enrichment
	Noroviruses	Environment
	Fenbendazole	Euthanasia
	Corticosterone	
CM	Cancer	Cancer
	Infectious diseases	Herpesviruses
		Obesity

2 that also made the list in 2008, anesthesia and enrichment, as well as environment and euthanasia. With regard to *CM*, the most published topics were cancer (also on the 2008 list), herpesviruses (as opposed to noroviruses in 2008 *JAALAS* and infectious disease in general in *CM* 2008), and obesity.

We encourage authors to submit review articles for both journals, especially on currently hot topics. In addition, we continue to seek special focus issues for both journals and invite anyone interested in volunteering to serve as a guest editor for a specific special topic issue of either journal to contact me to discuss the idea. Overviews and special focus topics are usually cited in subsequent publications, which has a positive influence on the journals' impact factors.

As always, your suggestions for improvements in the journals are welcomed. Thank you for your support in the development and growth of the journals.