

# Progress for *The Journal of Family Planning and Reproductive Health Care*

The format of the Journal has slightly changed this issue as we are not carrying the FACT this time, but have included an important paper about the British Government's new strategy for sexual health (see page 230). I hope this initiative will make interesting reading outside of the UK, although primarily targeted at UK readers.

We will return to include a FACT in the January issue.

This issue also sees the beginning of a set of commissioned articles: 'Statistics revisited: A review for contributors and readers', which I hope will make clearer a topic that can sometimes appear daunting!

Finally, the following completes the Journal's publication of the COPE Guidelines on publication ethics:

## Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE): Guidelines on good publication practice

### Media relations

#### Definition

Medical research findings are of increasing interest to the print and broadcast media.

Journalists may attend scientific meetings at which preliminary research findings are presented, leading to their premature publication in the mass media.

#### Action

1. Authors approached by the media should give as balanced an account of their work as possible, ensuring that they point out where evidence ends and speculation begins.
2. Simultaneous publication in the mass media and a peer-reviewed journal is advised, as this usually means that enough evidence and data have been provided to satisfy informed and critical readers.

3. Where this is not possible, authors should help journalists to produce accurate reports, but refrain from supplying additional data.
4. All efforts should be made to ensure that patients who have helped with the research should be informed of the results by the authors before the mass media, especially if there are clinical implications.
5. Authors should be advised by the organisers if journalists are to attend scientific meetings.
6. It may be helpful to authors to be advised of any media policies operated by the journal in which their work is to be published.

### Advertising

#### Definition

Many scientific journals and meetings derive significant income from advertising.

Reprints may also be lucrative.

#### Action

1. Editorial decisions must not be influenced by advertising revenue or reprint potential: editorial and advertising administration must be clearly separated.
2. Advertisements that mislead must be refused, and editors must be willing to publish criticisms, according to the same criteria used for material in the rest of the journal.
3. Reprints should be published as they appear in the journal unless a correction is to be added.

**Fran Reader**, FRCOG, MFFP,

*Honorary Editor, The Journal of Family Planning and Reproductive Health Care*