

## Editorial

This issue marks the completion of my first full volume of *Reproduction, Fertility and Development* as Editor, and so I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued interest in the journal, and for your support as a reader, an author and/or a referee. I know that when I was appointed Editor there were some who wondered whether I would make a huge number of changes and take RFD away from its roots in 'basic' research and move towards a more clinical bias. However, I think you can see by just a quick scan of the titles of the papers published this year that we have maintained our primary focus, which is 'hypothesis-driven research related to the scientific aspects of reproductive and developmental physiology, biochemistry, endocrinology, immunology, cell biology, genetics and behaviour'. The emphasis on hypothesis-driven research is new, and was recommended by RFD's Editorial Advisory Committee. However, in recognition of the importance that observational reports can have in improving our understanding, we will also consider these types of studies, as long as the information they provide leads to the development of a hypothesis.

While the authors and the readers are the lifeblood of a journal, it is the referees who keep the heart beating (to continue the metaphor), and so the importance of a thoughtful, critical review can't be overestimated. I have been truly gratified by the time and effort that so many of the referees have so obviously spent in reviewing manuscripts for RFD, and so have the authors – one group even thanked the referees in their Acknowledgments, because they felt that they had contributed so significantly to the final manuscript. So I would like to thank all of the referees who have been so helpful this year, and I hope that you will continue to be so considerate of the journal, and of the authors, when I come calling in the future.

But this led me to think about 'what is it that makes a good review?', and I have come to the conclusion that it is giving critical feedback while at the same time remembering to treat the manuscript with the same respect with which you would like your own manuscripts to be treated. Comments along the lines of 'this is awful' do not help the authors, and may significantly undermine the confidence of a junior researcher, and conversely, a report that consists solely of 'This is a very good paper.' does not indicate whether the referee really gave it their full consideration and attention. It is better to state both

what is good and what is not so good about the manuscript, and then explain how it could be improved – even when the recommendation is 'reject'. In fact, some authors have been so pleased with the comments and suggestions made by the referees that they have written back to me to thank me for the review, even though the paper was rejected.

Also, I do appreciate that calls are always being made on everyone's time – especially in the academic world, where an awful lot of just-one-more-things seem to get piled into the work basket – so I would like to emphasise that being a referee for RFD does not mean that you have to be a copyeditor, too. I am lucky in that RFD has a great copyediting team, and so there is no need for the referees to take the time to do this in addition to the scientific review. (Although if you do want to flex your Editorial muscle, please feel free to go ahead!)

Going back to my comments at the beginning of this Editorial, I think that the biggest change to RFD this year hasn't been my stewardship, but the introduction of OSPRey, the online submissions and peer review management system. With OSPRey now in place, authors can upload their manuscripts and then check on the progress of their manuscripts (and referees can access the manuscript they are reviewing) just by visiting the RFD website and clicking on 'OSPRey' (<http://www.publish.csiro.au/journals/rfd>). As some of you already know (since I am often in correspondence with people in the middle of the night, Australian time), I am not in Australia – I am on the west coast of Canada, and so OSPRey is going to make a big difference to my life, too. While OSPRey has been coming on-line, this has meant that there has been a lot of extra coordination needed between my office in Vancouver and the Production Office in Melbourne, and I would like to acknowledge the help and support of the Journal Manager, Jennifer Henry (who took over from Camilla Myers), the Production Editor, Helena Piraino, and the Office Manager, Leanne Hamilton, without whom this year would have been so much harder.

Finally, please feel free to contact me with your suggestions or comments regarding RFD. While I have been working closely with the Editorial Advisory Committee to try to ensure that RFD continues to meet the readers' and authors' needs, your critical reviews will help us to make it even better.

*Sharon T. Mortimer, Editor*