# EDITORIAL

Behaviorally oriented journals have been experiencing a reduction in the numbers of articles submitted for publication during the past few years, and JEAB is no exception. Given our roughly constant rejection rate of 50%, the result is a decrease in the number of published articles, as shown in Figure 1. In preparing this figure, I have excluded apparatus notes, reviews, and theoretical articles or notes from the count of published articles, because JEAB will always be devoted primarily to the publication of original research reports. Archival publication of original research is essential for our science and must continue. However, the climate of the times is not favorable for behavioral research, so special efforts may be required.

A number of regular JEAB readers have commented on the frequency of research articles in two classes: those using human subjects, and those using pharmacological variables. The proportions of research articles using human subjects or drugs are also plotted in Figure 1. Both kinds of articles decreased in proportion during the mid-1960's, with evidence of recovery starting in the mid-1970's and still in progress. Because these kinds of articles appear with relatively low frequency overall, and because of their somewhat special roles in the experimental analysis of behavior, it may be particularly important to encourage submissions in these areas.

For most of us, the long-term goals of the science of behavior include the understanding of behavioral processes in humans. The concepts and methods developed in the animal laboratory have had a profound impact on clinical and educational practices. However, the basic experimental study of human behavior has not kept pace with current developments in animal research, where major empirical and theoretical advances have occurred and some traditional notions have been severely shaken during the past decade or so.

Most research with animals has used relatively brief but frequent exposure to arbitrary environments—highly controlled enclosures with well-specified stimuli, simple responses of brief duration and clearly defined contingencies between responses and their consequences. Many orderly processes have been illuminated by experimental analysis in such arbitrary situations, but there has been considerable debate (e.g. Johnston, 1981) as to whether such processes are relevant to the behavior of animals in their natural environments. (Actually, it may be quite improper to consider such environments arbitrary—our invention and use of them is part of a natural process, and presumably has been selected by success in revealing order.)

Whatever the outcome of the debate, it is interesting to consider the possibility suggested by Schwartz (1974) that results with animals in such constrained settings may be more directly relevant to much of human behavior, occurring as it does in comparably arbitrary settings constructed by humans themselves, than to animal behavior in the wild. Schwartz's conjecture merits testing in basic research with human subjects designed to explore the similarities and differences in human and animal behavior processes more systematically, and to extend the methods of experimental analysis to processes presumed to be uniquely human. The first and second articles in this issue attest to the potential value of such work.

Neither I nor any of the current Associate Editors is primarily involved in research with

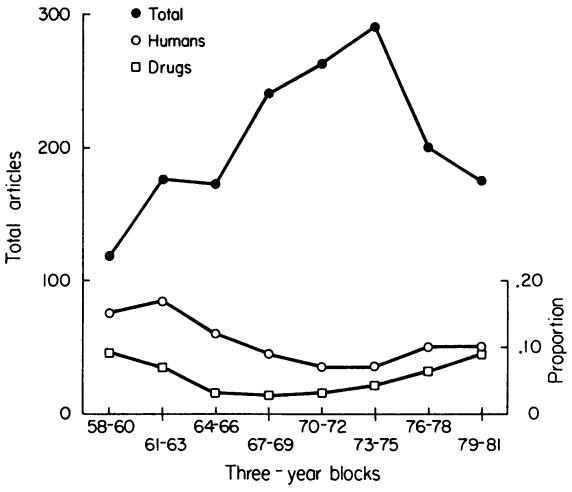


Figure 1.

human subjects at present. This should not deter authors from submitting basic research with human subjects for consideration by JEAB, however. A number of members of the Board of Editors have extensive experience working with humans, and are well aware of the special problems that arise with human subjects. I believe that it is in the best interest of our science that more effort be invested in the experimental analysis of human behavior, and I hope that a good share of it will find its way in JEAB's pages.

Behavioral pharmacology may also need special encouragement. Drugs may function as discriminative stimuli (see, for example, the technical article in this issue), or as reinforcers, or they may affect behavior in ways that are difficult to classify in conventional terms. However such effects may be interpreted, there is no question but that drugs are among the most potent experimental variables in our repertoire, and as such have great potential for contributing to analysis and understanding. As Dews (1970) pointed out, pharmacological research has repeatedly demonstrated the importance of our behavioral baselines in determining the effects of intruded variables, and has contributed importantly to the questioning of traditional psychological categories. This sort of challenge may be needed to avoid the gradual establishment of an orthodoxy that is inimical to our science, and JEAB should welcome pharmacological contributions that expand the domain of the analysis of behavior.

In the interest of providing explicit encouragement for the submission of behavioral pharmacology reports, I have asked Lewis Gollub to serve as Action Editor for manuscripts in this area. He will of course be advised by members of the regular Board of Editors, and the standards for acceptance of drug research will be consistent with those in other research areas.

There is a third general category of research reports that may also need special encouragement. Reports that break new ground in some way are sometimes submitted by authors who are unfamiliar with JEAB's expectations, and their papers are rejected because they fall so far outside the normal range of analytical methods, manner of data presentation, report format, or subject matter as to make their potential contribution obscure. In order to increase the chances of effectively introducing new approaches and expanding our field into new problem areas, I have asked Evalyn Segal to take on the role of Advisory Editor, to work with authors of potentially valuable papers and help them to bring their work into a form that will permit proper consideration in the normal editorial process. In this way, novel findings and ideas that might otherwise be lost can get exposure in these pages. As I indicated in my editorial of September 1980, our science needs variation in its methods and subject matter as well as concentration on established problem areas, and it is my hope that JEAB will have the opportunity to publish the best work in any area relevant to the experimental analysis of behavior.

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## REFERENCES


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