

Netherlands Heart Journal: accepted into PubMed Central!

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On 1 September 2006, we received the very good news that our Journal has been accepted into PubMed Central. Both the Editorial Board and the Publisher were delighted to hear this, as it will have an immediate impact on the status of our Journal. In addition, it was quite a relief for all of us as the evaluation process for acceptance in PubMed Central is a complex, lengthy and meticulous one. However, it has turned out to be a rewarding one too. With our indexed Journal, we have now definitely passed the threshold of international recognition, which is a major step forward. Over the years, we have had several attempts at becoming indexed, which did not initially succeed due to factors such as the language (at that time both Dutch and English) and the quality of the articles (particularly the lack of original papers).

To refresh our memories, our Journal was founded in 1987 as the *Nederlands Tijdschrift voor Cardiologie* and merged with the *Netherlands Journal of Cardiology* in 1994. The Journal then became known as 'Cardiologie'. This situation continued until April 2001, when the Journal completely switched to the English language and was re-baptised as the *Netherlands Heart Journal*, its current title. Based on the critical comments received from previous external evaluations, many editorial, stylistic, and structural changes have taken place in order to enhance the quality of the Journal between 2001 and 2005.

On 1 January 2005, our Journal changed publishing company and was taken over by Bohn, Stafleu & van Loghum (BSL). At that time the Chief Editorial Board

and BSL decided to strictly redefine the aims of the Journal. Our main goal was inclusion in PubMed, preferably within a time window of two years. To that purpose we expanded our Editorial Board, adding well-known scientists and expert opinion leaders. We also instituted an International Advisory Board. Much effort has been put into getting authors to send us their original papers as a journal predominantly becomes indexed based on its original input. This quest for original papers was not easy. On the one hand, a journal needs original papers to become indexed, but on the other hand, authors prefer to submit their work to a journal that is already included in PubMed. To additionally motivate researchers to send us their original papers, the Executive Board of our National Society set up the Dirk Durrer Award in 2006. This prize, consisting of a nice sculpture of an owl and a financial award, is for the best original papers in the experimental and clinical categories, and is handed out each year at our National Society's Annual Spring Congress. The prize was named after Professor Dirk Durrer (1918-1984), the Grandfather of Dutch Cardiology.

At the time of the transition to BSL, in January 2005, our journal had just been accepted in EMBASE (an online version of *Excerpta Medica*, a European database for Biomedical Sciences). Inclusion in EMBASE helps to speed up the indexing procedure for PubMed Central. Generally, a journal that is included in EMBASE is accepted for further review by the Literature Selection Technical Review Committee (LSTRC), an advisory group of the National Library of Medicine (NLM).

PubMed Central is the US National Institutes of Health free digital archive of biomedical and life sciences journal literature. Inclusion in PubMed Central is open to any life science journal that meets the standards of the NLM. A journal must qualify on two levels. First the NLM reviews the scientific and editorial quality of the journal. Then it evaluates the technical quality of the journal's digital files. A journal will not make it into PubMed Central if it fails either of these tests. After further careful evaluation and

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additional editorial improvements we applied for inclusion in PubMed Central in the summer of 2005. Many requirements had to be met, mainly regarding technical issues. Finally in September 2006, our Journal was accepted in PubMed Central. The complete indexing procedure therefore took more than one year.

On behalf of the Chief Editorial Board we would like to thank the Publisher (BSL) and the Executive Board of our Society (NVVC), who worked very hard and offered an excellent platform to accomplish acceptance into PubMed Central. We also acknowledge the

valuable contributions of the Netherlands Heart Foundation (NHS) and the InterCardiology Institute of the Netherlands (ICIN). Last but not least we are grateful to the Editorial Board; most of its members have put a lot of effort into our Journal by submitting high-quality papers to speed up the indexing procedure. The next step will be to obtain an impact factor, but this will probably take another few years. At the moment, we may foster a national pride based on the international recognition of our Journal. We hope that this achievement will be an impetus to authors to send in their papers to our Netherlands Heart Journal. ■