

"Blood Transfusion": towards the future

Claudio Velati

The first issue of "Blood Transfusion" in 2007 brings some changes that I believe are important to present.

In the first place, the Board of Directors of the Italian Society of Transfusion Medicine and Immunohaematology (SIMTI) has nominated a new Editor-in-Chief, who succeeds Giorgio Reali. This change enables an official claim to be made for what I believe is an unmatched record of the longest working Editor-in-Chief of a journal, not only a scientific one. In fact, Giorgio Reali became Editor-in-Chief of "La Trasfusione del Sangue", now "Blood Transfusion", in 1979 and stepped down from this post in 2006 after 27 years of uninterrupted leadership.

However, Giorgio Reali not only directed our journal: he was the founder, in 1954, of our Scientific Society, Director – for 23 years – of the Transfusion Service at *Ospedali Galliera* in Genoa, President of SIMTI for 7 years, and founder of the Italian Register of Bone Marrow Donors in 1989. Until 2002, he was the Italian representative in two Committees of Experts on transfusion medicine issues for the Council of Europe at Strasbourg and was nominated Honorary President of the Scientific Society by the General Members' Assembly of SIMTI in 2004.

Giorgio is a reference figure for transfusion medicine in Italy and abroad, but is also a delightful person, who is an example of dedication and willingness to help other people. He never fails to show his value and will, in fact, continue to help us with the new organisation of "Blood Transfusion": he will be "Senior Editor" with the duty of supervising the changes underway and guaranteeing the continuity and good functioning of the organisational systems. I believe that everyone will realise the honour, but no light duty, which I have in succeeding Giorgio in the role of Editor-in-Chief.

The second important change in this issue of "Blood Transfusion" is that it is published entirely in English. With this change, the journal has reached a fundamental step in

the process of renewal that was started in 2003 when the Board of Directors of SIMTI planned the re-launch of "La Trasfusione del Sangue". The main aims of the project were to build a valid scientific instrument, in the first place for members of SIMTI and, eventually, also for Scientific Societies in other countries, to maintain the journal's strong educational value, but also to provide a good overall level of quality, through careful selection of the articles and evaluation of their correctness and to obtain listing by accredited agencies.

I consider that some of the aims have been achieved: the level of the journal has definitely improved and its governing bodies (Editorial Board, referees) have started to work using more selective criteria and higher scientific standards; however, the simultaneous presentation of English and Italian versions of articles has begun to create problems in the light of increased international visibility of the journal.

The decision, which in truth was suffered, to convert to a purely English version of the journal is a sign of the strengthened resolve of the Board of Directors of SIMTI to complete the original project.

However, I believe that the programme of initiatives accompanying the change to a wholly English version of the journal can reconcile the fear that this decision will make the journal less useful to the world of Italian Transfusion Medicine with the needs to make the journal more competitive and better able to support scientific exchanges at an international level. In fact, although the printed version of "Blood Transfusion" will only be published in English, an Italian version will be available on the SIMTI website (www.transfusionmedicine.org), which, at the same time, will become more dynamic.

As soon as articles are accepted, they will be made available on line (about 3-6 months earlier than the printed version). Each article will be given a Digital Object Identifier

(DOI) number such that they can be cited as pre-published articles. The index and abstracts of the articles will be available on line to all visitors to the site before the release of the printed version of each issue of the journal, whereas members of SIMTI and subscribers will have access to the full text of the articles. At the beginning of each calendar year, the full texts of the articles published two years previously will be made public (i.e., at the beginning of 2007 all the issues published in 2005 will be available to the general public). Furthermore, updated information technology, such as e-mail notification of the publication of each issue and facilitated access to the website, will gradually be introduced.

The organisational structure of the journal has been renovated: the Editor-in-Chief will be supported by a board of Associate Editors, most of whom are new to the journal, who will take care, as experts and promoters of more extensive participation, of specific sectors of Transfusion Medicine. The international character of the Editorial Board will be enhanced, since the Board, which already includes outstanding national figures, is now welcoming important personages from other European countries. Furthermore, contacts have been established to set up 'twinning' with other Scientific Societies from which "Blood Transfusion" would welcome contributions.

The board of Associate Editors has been refreshed in part with the aim of having "Blood Transfusion" listed by international agencies (PubMed, Medline, Current

Contents, Index Medicus, etc.) and included in the database of the Institute for Scientific Information (ISI), an essential requisite for obtaining an impact factor in the future.

Another change underway is a review of the procedures for submitting and reviewing manuscripts, which will be made easier with the use of a computerised system.

All these initiatives are, of course, aimed at making "Blood Transfusion" a scientific journal that will attract the interest of the scientific community involved in Transfusion Medicine in Italy, but also worldwide, both as readers and as contributors of articles.

The project was, and remains, fascinating and ambitious, but challenging and not easy to achieve. I am, however, confident of the good outcome, given that the people involved by the Board of Directors in "Blood Transfusion" are motivated and have excellent scientific credentials.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those people who have enthusiastically accepted the task of helping this project and ask everyone to support it, above all, by submitting articles that will allow "Blood Transfusion" to contribute to expanding knowledge in the huge field of Transfusion Medicine.

Claudio Velati
Editor-in-Chief
Blood Transfusion