
In this number

The continuing involvement of the Journal with continental Europe is demonstrated by the fact that papers on epidemiological topics in this number come from 10 different countries. Several papers have an international perspective—one coming from Dundee in Scotland, and one from the Netherlands focusing on the European Community. The latter paper has one of our Editorial Board members as a co-author, as does one of the methodological papers (but readers should know that the normal refereeing process has of course been followed for both).

There are three methodological papers, looking at ethnic minority groups (a review article), at social questions, and taking a broad view of measurement issues.

The proportion of reports on health services research

and evaluation is still not very large but a steady stream of papers is being submitted. It is encouraging to see that such papers are not restricted to government health systems such as the National Health Service in the UK.

Short reports are also not yet common but many are in preparation for publication and forthcoming numbers of the Journal will each contain several. Authors of short reports should be encouraged by a very rapid turnaround—we will aim at two or three months from acceptance. For full articles we are still working on six months or longer turnaround because we have an increasing number of submissions and the Journal is expanding rather more slowly.

Editorial

Referees: authors to suggest referees for their papers

All serious scientific journals use peer review systems for appraising and improving submitted articles. Peer reviewers judge manuscripts by assessing the importance of the research question, the study's scientific strength, the written presentation, and the appropriateness for the particular journal.¹

Several journals have recently begun inviting authors to suggest people who might be willing and able to offer informed and useful opinions as referees. The *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health* now wishes to follow

this example. All authors submitting papers after April 1994 will be expected to give names and addresses of four experts whom they consider competent and suitable to review their work. The editorial board does not commit itself to use these nominated referees but will make an independent decision. However, at least some of those suggested will usually be asked to advise the Journal.

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¹ Evans AT, McNutt RA, Fletcher SW, Fletcher RH. The characteristics of peer reviewers who produce good quality reviews. *J Gen Intern Med* 1993;8:422-8