Editorial
Maintaining the communication and information tool of the Belgian anesthesiology community

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As of January 2012, Professor Marcel Vercauteren will pass on the torch of being the Editor of our Journal. He assumed this function for 5 years, from 2007 to the present time, after having been co-Editor for several years. We must take this opportunity to highlight his editorial work, which has allowed achieving high standard publications in our Journal. At the time he started, there was a relative shortness of submitted manuscripts. With the indefectible and efficient help of Elke Verstraeten, the secretary of the journal, he has improved the rigor of the peer-review workflow through the submission of manuscripts to three experts in the field, and through the tight follow-up of delays during the review process. As a consequence, the number of submitted manuscripts progressively increased, leading to a current 20% rejection rate. In addition, he included original papers in the issue devoted to the annual meeting of the Society for Anesthesia and Resuscitation of Belgium (SARB) and previously containing only summaries of lectures given during the congress. This has led to four regular issues on a yearly basis, instead of three. He also actively participated to the content of the journal as an author of original papers and editorials.

We must thank him a lot for this selfless enormous amount of work. Indeed, the importance of such a communication and information tool for our Belgian anesthesiology community may sometimes not directly appear. The Acta Anaesthesiologica Belgica has now been published for more than 60 years!, and has resisted to several phagocyte attempts. It is unique in a small occidental country as our, insofar as even bigger neighbors don’t have it. It allows not only communicating interesting clinical observations, but also making the point regarding hot clinical topics through the publication of reviews made by experts in the field. Last but not least, the Acta Anaesthesiologica Belgica are the public window of the SARB and of the Belgian Association for Regional Anaesthesia (BARA). They reflect the views of our associations through the publication of expert recommendations and statements on debated issues, which, among other interests, may serve as scientific references for our political decision-makers.

The new editorial team will be composed of three persons: Doctor Yves Kremer, Professor Marc Van de Velde, and me. Our initial goals are fourfold. First, we will aim at perpetuating the rigor and search for quality instilled by Professor Vercauteren. Second, we will remain the interface between the SARB/BARA and the anesthesiology community, or other third parties such as the political decision-makers. Third, we will try to enlarge our readership and impact on the anesthesiology community through the regular publication of invited reviews by experts, on selected topics of interest for general practitioners. Finally, we will try to improve the visibility of the journal, through the implementation of a web-based editorial managing system for paper submission by authors and handling by editors.

The present issue has already been composed with those principles in mind. Beside a few case reports, it contains two excellent review papers. The one by Hollevoets et al. makes the point regarding the preoperative management of chronic medications. The second one is endorsed by the BARA, and has been approved by the SARB and the Belgian Professional Association of Specialists in Anesthesia (BPASA). It has been written by a subgroup of experts in the field of thrombosis and coagulation, and contains the guidelines for performing central neural blockade in patients with a drug-induced alteration of coagulation. As a third edition of the BARA guidelines, it constitutes a nec-
cessary actualization with respect to newly available medications. These two practical syntheses must serve as references for our daily practice.

With such a course of action, and with the help of all stakeholders within the publishing system, everything is set up for the continuation of our unique tool, which has to be maintained at all costs. In that respect, we must insist on the importance of rigor in the review process. Inserting supplemental work into busy schedules in the form of performing reviews for the journal may not always be an easy task for reviewers. But conscientious performance of the work and respect of delays is mandatory for the perpetuation of a competitive journal, attractive for authors and readers, within an area where the offer is large. This is of interest for all of us.