This year marks the tenth year of publication of our journal, European Archives of Paediatric Dentistry. Looking back over those years it is encouraging to see how the journal has grown from just a few pages and published papers to being of a size and quality that reflects well on the Academy. This has not been without a great deal of time and effort on the part of many people, most of whom have been with the journal since its inception.

As we enter the tenth year of publication it is salutary to consider how the journal functions and selects the papers that we publish. As an editor this is sometimes very encouraging and at other times depressing. Mainly these sentiments occur as a paper is received. In 20% of cases a preliminary review is encouraging as a paper will be on an interesting subject and well presented. The authors have bothered to read the guidelines and, apart from minor errors, the paper is readable and accurately typed. The converse is true with about 25% of papers where either the subject is nothing new but only a re-hash of an old subject or more likely the paper is badly written, inaccurate and the authors have failed to read the guidelines for publishing in the EAPD.

At the risk of repetition, authors need to pay particular attention to the following. Firstly, it appears that some authors have not bothered to check through Pubmed what has already been published on their subject. In such cases there are already plenty of reports in the dental literature that more than adequately cover the subject. As editor my first step in assessing a newly arrived paper is to enter Pubmed and type in the author’s own key words. If this shows many previous works then the paper is set aside.

The second step in assessing a new paper is to look at how it has been presented and have the author(s) paid attention to detail. Have they read the guidelines for the title page layout and authors’ details? We request no first names, no titles and no degrees. Yet a significant number of submitted papers contain these items. In these instances it is also clear that the authors have not even bothered to look at a copy of the EAPD and to see how it is laid out and what authors’ details are printed.

Another area of considerable error is reference style. We use Harvard because it is the most user-friendly system and allows major changes to the text on review. Yet in at least 10% of submitted papers the Vancouver system of numbered references has been used. Again, this shows that the authors have not bothered to check the guidelines. Related to this is that the EAPD contains its references in square brackets [Fred and John, 2008], yet too many authors have not checked on this.

While it may seem too pedantic for editors to insist on these details, poorly presented papers, with a lack of attention to the guidelines, reflects on the authors. If they have not bothered to pay due attention and make sure that their paper is accurately presented what confidence can we have that their research was competently carried out? Badly presented papers are usually an indication of badly conducted research.

All of these factors detailed above have a major impact on how a paper is processed by EAPD. Those that are of an interesting subject, well presented and accurately written are dealt with immediately. Often they are sent out to reviewers within a few hours. If a positive review comes in then the papers are processed quickly and advanced up the publishing schedule. In contrast papers that on first read are of mundane, repeated subjects, the title page is all wrong, the abstract is poorly written and the references are in the wrong style goes to the bottom of the pile. These are left for a rainy day or when I have nothing else to do. If they are really bad they are rejected and go straight back to the author(s).
You will probably by this juncture asking why are we so ‘picky’? The processing of manuscripts takes time, a lot of time, when the reading, sending out to review, getting the review back, sending it to the author, getting a final copy and then editing the final copy is considered. At each step an editor has to judge to what degree of detail should he or she spend making up for the author(s) deficiencies. Therefore the better presented a paper is the less editorial time is needed. When a manuscript has not been well written many changes have to be made, sometimes taking several hours of the editor and copy-editor’s time. Going through a paper and changing brackets (..) to [..] and et al to et al., takes a lot of time, to give just a couple of examples.

It is an old adage that it is wise not to annoy the editors! Paying attention to detail during preparation of the manuscript does that. Authors should aim to present a paper for which the editor exclaims ‘that is a beautifully presented and interesting paper, we will certainly want to publish it.’

Finally, therefore, the advice from the editor’s desk, which applies to all journals, is to first of all read the guidelines. Having done that then read the guidelines again. After that look at the published journal in great detail for layout, punctuation, grammar, reference style, where full stops (periods) are used as well as commas and type face and font size. When that has been accomplished then read the guidelines again!

All authors want their manuscripts accepted and published as quickly as possible. To publish in the EAPD please follow our instructions paying great attention to detail and we will work with you to achieve a rapid publication.

**Martin Curzon**

The EAPD Guidelines are reproduced at the end of this issue and may also be accessed through the EAPD website: [www.eapd.gr](http://www.eapd.gr)