

## EDITORIAL

# The psychology of rejection

It is a sad fact that as the Editor-in-Chief of *JHPS*, and towards the end of a long and not always illustrious career, my submissions to journals right around the world have been rejected more times than accepted. I know that feeling of dashed hope, the indignant view that neither the reviewers nor the editor had the intellect to understand my message, and the yah-boo-sucks declaration when my paper eventually bursts into print thanks to my sixth choice of journal.

“Well *they* recognised the value of my work,” I ultimately conclude, “so why didn’t *you*?”

Few journals can publish everything they receive. Some may, especially if struggling for submissions, but any journal with a sense of pride, honour and worthiness is obliged to filter out appropriate from inappropriate work. The definition of appropriateness is made by the journal, whatever it may be. What is appropriate to one publication may be inappropriate to another. In *JHPS*’s case that means roughly 60% of what it receives is accepted. However, that does not mean that a rejected paper is worthless; far from it. Some are actually very good. Rejection may well imply that despite a clear message, a submission may simply concern the wrong topic—for example, the journal may already have something similar waiting in the wings—or may have the wrong timing. Does one really wish to publish yet another, possibly brilliant paper on a specific design of hip resurfacing when that model has already been withdrawn?

If 60% of our authors are happy, one must presume that 40% are not, so it is important to see these percentages in true perspective. For example, some of the longer serving journals within the Scientific, Technical and Medical sector will boast acceptance rates lower than 20%. That is a lot of unhappy authors. Yet see the bigger picture. If you write for the mass market, and that is something your Editor-in-Chief does from time to time, it is rare to even receive an acknowledgement of your submission. A mainstream publisher can be bombarded by upwards of 5000 manuscripts every year. Of those, 95% are rejected outright; the

remaining 5% receive a second look. The overall chance of an unsolicited submission making it into print for the mass market is of the order of 0.25%. And that is an average figure. For one very well known publisher of romance, the odds are a frightening 0.04%. No wonder self-publishing has taken off in such a big way.

And for the hard-done-by hip preservation specialist, seeking to place their life’s work somewhere that the world can view? *JHPS*’s 60% acceptance rate is actually a gift. So if you have secretly had that chick lit manuscript sitting in your bottom drawer for the past three years, do remember that your chances of publication in *JHPS* are 1500 times better than out there in the big wide world of mass-market writing.

There are some classic rejection stories, too. How about Stieg Larsson, Swedish author of the Millennium Trilogy that included *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, and sold 55 million copies? He was the horrified recipient of a letter declaring, “You are not good enough to be a journalist”. Agatha Christie—how about her? She endured five years of continual rejection and yet her book sales now top \$US2 billion. Only William Shakespeare has sold more. And that is not forgetting the author who, after 12 rejections, was eventually published thanks to the eight-year-old daughter of a mainstream publisher. The editor wrote to say that the writer would be best advised to get a day job as she had little chance of making a living from children’s books. The title? *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone* by JK Rowling, of course.

So if you happen to be one of the unfortunate 40% who has been rejected by *JHPS*, please forgive us. It may be there is a material fault in your paper, or it could simply be that your timing is wrong. It may also be that we, as an editorial team backed up by some fantastic reviewers, have been unable to recognise the value of what you have done. It could be our fault. It is not always yours.

I much enjoyed the last issue of *JHPS*, volume 1.2, as there were so many very interesting papers. Thanks to all our authors for taking the time and trouble to offer up so

much fascinating work. One in particular helped me in a heated debate with a colleague the other day as we were discussing the relative merits and disadvantages of hip arthroscopic surgery versus its open equivalent. The paper by Glynn *et al.* [1] from Bern (Switzerland) has clearly demonstrated that no atrophy or degeneration of periarticular hip muscles could be found after surgical hip dislocation almost two years down the line. They conclude “any raised concerns about the invasiveness and potential muscle trauma for this type of surgery (*viz.* open surgery) are unfounded.” That is good to know.

And what about this issue, volume 2.1, the first of 2015? You will see some new features are beginning to take hold, thanks to a team of three Editorial Correspondents who have kindly offered to help *JHPS* develop further. There is *What the Papers Say* now expertly prepared by Ajay Malviya from UK, the Book and App Reviews being masterminded by Al Stubbs from the US (Wake Forest) and Correspondence beginning to appear thanks to Parm Singh from Australia (Melbourne). You will find all three on our journal masthead. As for the papers in this issue,

again it is impossible to choose. Yet might I suggest you start by reading part 2 of Hogervorst and Vereecke’s review [2] on the evolution of the human hip? This time they consider the periarticular soft tissues. I found their ideas fascinating and their style of writing first class.

So welcome to this, the third issue of *JHPS*, a journal that is now beginning to truly represent the views of the hip preservation community.

My very best wishes to you all.

**Richard Villar**

*Editor-in-Chief, Journal of Hip Preservation Surgery*

## REFERENCES

1. Glynn AA, Barattiero FY, Albers CE, Hanke MS, Steppacher SD, Tannast M. Surgical hip dislocation does not result in atrophy or fatty infiltration of periarticular hip muscles. *J Hip Preserv Surg* 2014;1(2):82–95
2. Hogervorst T, Vereecke EE. Evolution of the human hip. Part 2: muscling the double extension. *J Hip Preserv Surg* 2015;2(1):3–14.