



Journal of anesthesia, history, current status, and future direction

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To the Editor:

More than 30 years has passed since The Journal of Anesthesia has founded by the Japanese Society of Anesthesiologist (JSA). At the moment when I start my task as Editor-in-Chief of the Journal, I would like to make brief summary of the historical path, current status, and future direction of the Journal.

Historical path of the journal

The Journal of Anesthesia was launched as the official journal of JSA in 1987. In the first volume of the Journal, Dr. Keisuke Amaha, the first Editor-in-Chief, wrote as following [1]; “Thoughts of publishing a journal of our Society in English thus developed as an inevitable consequence and, after long and careful debate we have determined to do so.” At that time, most scientific discoveries made by Japanese anesthesiologists were reported in the local language, and there was an increasing desire among the JSA members to have “their own” international journal.

During the history of the journal, eight Editors-in-chief have been engaged in the management of the journal (Table 1). Since its inception, the publication procedures, policies, and content have changed dramatically according to technical advances and academic requirements. The journal has benefited from digital publishing and the availability of online information. In 2008, Editorial Manager was adopted as the electronic submission and editing system, which enabled the journal to conduct rapid peer review. Additionally, the journal was indexed in Medline and the Web of Science in 2003 and 2007, respectively. In 2009, the first journal

impact factor was reported as 0.837 in Journal Citation Research. It gradually increased to 1.628 in 2018.

In 2015, JSA launched JA Clinical Report as a companion journal of The Journal of Anesthesia [2]. JA Clinical Report is an open-access, peer-reviewed journal that aims to provide an attractive platform to publish important clinical reports. Due to the limited printing space available, most case reports currently submitted to The Journal of Anesthesia are now recommended to consider JA Clinical Report as their publication platform.

The journal current status

The Journal of Anesthesia is now becoming one of the major international journals in the field of anesthesiology. Currently, the Journal receives more than 900 submissions annually, and the number of submitted articles is gradually increasing. I am proud to report that the reputation of the journal has been improved due to our rapid review process (Table 2).

Several attractive projects are on-going in the journal. In addition to regular articles, The Journal of Anesthesia currently publishes invited reviews. Editorial board members coordinate articles that provide cutting-edge information on hot topics in the field of anesthesiology. For instance, six invited review articles were published between 2019 and 2020, highlighting pediatric pain management [3], labor analgesia [4], neurotoxicity of general anesthesia [5], post-operative immune rejection in transplant patients [6, 7], and neurobiology of abnormal pain [8]. We are delighted to see that these reviews have attracted much scientific attention from our readers. Please look out for more interesting articles in upcoming issues.

The novel coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic has had a substantial impact on healthcare systems around the world. Anesthesia practice has also been seriously affected [9]. We now face the dual challenge of ensuring the safety of our patients as well as healthcare providers during routine clinical practice. To enhance access to

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Table 1 Journal of anesthesia editor-in-chief

Keisuke Amaha	Tokyo	1987–1993
Yasuhiro Shimada	Nagoya	1993–1995
Fukuichiro Okumura	Yokohama	1995–1998
Hidenori Toyooka	Tsukuba	1998–2004
Koh Shingu	Hirakata	2004–2007
Sumio Hoka	Sagamihara	2007–2011
Kazuyoshi Hirota	Hirosaki	2011–2017
Michiaki Yamakage	Sapporo	2017–2021

Table 2 Editorial status of the journal of anesthesia

	2017	2018	2019
Total submitted	760	867	912
Average days to final disposition accept	137	134	133
Average days to final disposition reject	39	33	32

literature about the biological, social, and medical effects of COVID-19 among anesthesiologists, The Journal of Anesthesia decided to publish a series of special open-access articles, “Anesthesia in the Time of COVID-19”. This series covers information about the relationship between anesthesia and COVID-19 and provides useful information for the continuing fight against COVID-19.

Future direction

One of the important aims of the journal is to promote the scientific activity of Japanese anesthesiologists [10]. The ability to write a scientific article targeting international readers is an important skill required by certified anesthesiologists. Unfortunately, young anesthesiologists in Japan do not have sufficient opportunities to receive such training. The peer review process is sometimes a difficult experience for authors, but the sense of achievement upon acceptance is great. I wish young authors will discover an interest in scientific research through discussions with our editors and reviewers.

At the same time, the journal is considered one of the leading anesthesia journals in Asian and Middle Eastern countries. More than half of the articles we review are submitted from countries in these regions, with the number of submissions continuously increasing (Table 3). The journal needs to encourage articles with high educational priority, such as “educational article series”, for a global audience, including readers from these countries.

Table 3 Article submissions from universal lesions

	2017	2018	2019
Japan	184	173	170
Other Asia	266	321	358
Europe	74	83	92
Americas	71	77	73
Middle East	125	162	162
Africa	39	46	54
Pacific	1	5	3
Total	760	867	912

Conclusion

In the era of the pandemic, we have learned the educational value of scientific journals once again. The first editorial [1] continues, “It is our wish that, by means of this new venture, Japanese techniques, clinical problems, and continuing research will now become available to anesthesiologists throughout the world.”

It is time to start our new venture.

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