Fertile Fields

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Gamete Research. Editor R.B.L. Gwatkin. 8/yr in 2 vols. (Alan R. Liss.) $120 US, $142 Europe. *Archives of Andrology.* Editor-in-chief E.S.E. Hafez. 8/yr in 2 vols. (Elsevier/North-Holland Biomedical.) $208. *Reproduccion.* Editor-in-chief J. Cortés-Prieto. 4/yr. (MTP Press, Lancaster, UK.) £20 (personal); £35 (institutional).

Gamete Research (GR) was conceived with the aim of creating a channel of communication between scientists working in the general areas of gamete biology, fertilization and embryonic development in different phyla, even different kingdoms. Thus the papers cover such topics as sperm ultrastructure, sperm motility, oocyte maturation, fertilization and cleavage in a diverse range of species including ferns, crustaceans, echinoderms, amphibians and mammals, including man. Book reviews and useful review articles also appear, and the journal maintains a good standard of production.

For reproductive biologists working exclusively with mammals this newcomer is particularly welcome, since conventional outlets for their speciality such as the *Journal of Reproduction and Fertility* and *Biology of Reproduction* do not encourage the comparative approach and so rarely publish articles on non-mammalian species. The high quality of research appearing in GR has been particularly evident of late, perhaps indicating a progressive increase in the popularity of the journal. It can certainly be recommended.

Also reflecting the growth of distinct subdisciplines in reproductive biology is the appearance of *Archives of Andrology* (AA), a clinically directed journal specializing in male reproductive physiology. The journal publishes a balanced mixture of scientific papers dealing with anatomical, physiological and biochemical aspects of male reproduction in animal models, and very clinically orientated articles reporting on such topics as sexually transmissible diseases and the characterization, diagnosis and treatment of male infertility. In addition to research papers and short communications, AA publishes review articles which I found to be one of the strongest aspects of the journal. In contrast, the research papers are of variable quality and in this respect the journal does not score as highly as its main competitor, the *International Journal of Andrology.*

AA is professionally put together, and any clinically orientated department wishing to cover this rapidly developing field should certainly take it. However, those predominantly interested in the scientific aspects of male reproductive physiology might be better served by the competition.

Yet another journal of reproduction to appear recently, or rather re-emerge under a new imprint, is *Reproduccion,* the official organ of the International Federation of Fertility Societies and the International Academy of Reproductive Medicine. The journal is aimed at a broad spectrum of readers covering a wide range of clinical topics (andrology, gynaecology, sociology) as well as the science of reproduction in animal models, including sub-mammalian species. As an illustration of the variety of interests covered, a recent issue contained papers on oogenesis in *Bufo arenarum,* human uterine contractility in the puerperium and endometrial bacterial flora following the insertion of an IUD.

The geographical bias of *Reproduccion*

is reflected in the fact that about 50 per cent of the articles are written in Spanish or Portuguese (with English summaries) while the remainder are in English. Its real purpose, then, is to act as an important outlet for scientists working in the reproductive sciences in Spain, Cuba, Mexico and other Latin American countries, and it is in such locations that the primary market for the journal must lie. *Reproduccion* contains some quality science and, for the sake of those not conversant with Spanish and Portuguese, is covered by all of the major indexing and abstracting journals. □

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Developments in Physiology . . .

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Journal of Developmental Physiology. Editor C.T. Jones. 6/yr. (Blackwell Scientific.) £50 UK, $138 US, £60 elsewhere. *Placenta.* Editors H. Fox and W. Page Faulk. 4/yr. (W.B. Saunders.) £32.50. *American Journal of Physiology: Endocrinology and Metabolism.* Editor E. Knobil. 12/yr in 2 vols. (American Physiological Society.) $55 US, $70 elsewhere. *American Journal of Physiology: Gastrointestinal and Liver Physiology.* Editor L.R. Johnson. 12/yr in 2 vols. (American Physiological Society.) $50 US, $65 elsewhere.

It is almost a truism to remark that a certain area of science is expanding. Yet, of course, the statement applies to many aspects of physiology and here, in the *Journal of Developmental Physiology* (JDP) and *Placenta,* are two new journals making manifest such growth in the study of fetal development.

Publication of research in this field was previously scattered through a large number of unrelated journals, particularly in the fields of obstetrics and paediatrics. The intention of drawing together this material in *Placenta* and JDP (which overlap to a certain extent), with the additional hope of stimulating research in these fields, seems to be justified.

In the opening editorial of *Placenta,* the new journal is put in context: "the fecundity of medical and scientific journals is quite alarming . . . the lack of a forum for placental studies is glaringly apparent". However, although the editors express a wish to publish material from "workers in an unusually wide field of interest and disciplines", to date this aim has not been fully achieved since a large number of the papers are morphological studies of a clinical nature. The quality of production of the journal is excellent; the papers are well laid out and many contain a generous number of beautiful micrographs. The same quality has been extended to the hardback supplements (two so far) which are the proceedings of conferences.

Disappointingly, the quality of some of the papers in *Placenta* is below average; a few are so short as to resemble expanded abstracts padded out with a few large figures and there is sometimes an unnecessary subdivision of material into several papers. Other editorial weaknesses are apparent; for example, some papers lack a summary and manuscripts "in preparation" are included in the reference list, a bad practice in my view.

The Guardian (22 January 1980) in a prominent article emphasized that the human placenta is "one of the most promising experimental animals of the future". A view from a different perspective was given by R.D.H. Boyd in a review in *Placenta* on the topic of transport of substances across the placenta: "there must be few fields of classical physiology as poorly understood as this one". Thus the problems of investigating processes in the placenta are great, but so is the potential. I hope that *Placenta* will stimulate sound scientific research in the entire field.

JDP aims to publish "original research