Editorial

On behalf of the Editors and the Publisher I would like to welcome readers of this first issue of the journal at the start of the new millennium. Vast time and money were spent to prevent complications due to the millennium-bug, but are we ourselves 'millennium-proof'? Are we ready to face the problems that will occur? Does that also count for scientists? The editorial of *Gut* concerning the COPE guidelines on *Good Publication Practice* states that 'The aim of these guidelines is to re-affirm the principle of honesty in research and publishing and places great emphasis on prevention rather than cure'. Also an article in a Dutch newspaper entitled: 'Internet threatens scientific publishers', concerning a study published by the Dutch 'Centraal Planbureau' called 'Publishers get caught in the Web?' They state that scientists who would like to be informed about the newest developments do not wait until the scientific journal has been published, but visit the Internet to read the already available electronic versions. They furthermore discuss the 'hallmark' and 'first date of publication'. Both phenomena are related to the complicated and time-consuming interplay between author, Editor, editorial board member, publisher and subscribers. Some Universities calculate the number of scientific members of staff paid by the Government based on the number of published papers times the impact factor. These Universities also diminish the budget available for Scientific Libraries and at the

same time encourage the development of scientific web-sites to enable the fast publication of important papers. Thereby they need so called 'third parties' to justify the quality of the paper and the hallmark of the web-site. In that case the impact factor will no longer be a distinguished factor, but the number of hits per page on the web-site. Ivan Bonta, the Founding Editor, introduced the 'Janus' symbol on the inside cover when he started publication of *Mediators of Inflammation*. The dualism as depicted with two faces, more or less seen in pharmacological and toxicological doses of medicines, but also apparent for several mediators in inflammatory sites of the tissue, could also be true for the availability of scientific papers. In my opinion it is not only looking back in anger and forwards in gladness, but a well-considered use of both printed scientific journals and web-sites. In the year 2000 we welcome authors to submit their papers to our rapid journal (mean paper handling time submission-publication still less than 4 months) and will be happy to publish the peer-reviewed manuscripts in glossy print. The paper will also be available in electronic form over the Internet via CatchWord.

Dr Freek J. Zijlstra
Executive Editor

1. M. Farthing. Editorial. *Gut* 2000; **46**: 143. COPE Guidelines: 296-300.
2. J. van Barschot. NRC Handelsblad, 28 February 2000, 11.