

The application of clinical genetics

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In 2012, *The Application of Clinical Genetics* enters its fifth year of publication. The journal has had a change of Editor-in-Chief: Dr David H Tegay stepped down and I was appointed to serve as the new Editor-in-Chief. As his successor, I thank Dr Tegay for his great work for the journal. I hope I can continue his successful editorial contributions. Moreover, I thank the many reviewers for their sustained support of the journal.

The Application of Clinical Genetics is dedicated to open access publishing – as all Dove Press journals are. This means that authors will be charged for the publication process, but the acceptance of a manuscript is based solely on its scientific quality. This is what I will be responsible for as Editor-in-Chief. The team at Dove Press is a constant help with all administrative duties concerning peer reviewal, and I want to express my thanks for their prompt and reliable help.

The field of clinical genetics is facing new challenges with the broad availability of large-scale screening methods for gene mutations, such as high-throughput sequencing and biochips. This means that ethical issues regarding the handling of genetic information must be addressed, both for the individual and for society.¹⁻³ For example, sequencing of cell-free, fetal nucleic acids in the maternal blood to locate fetal aneuploidy, especially trisomy 21, may become broadly available soon, with even faster results than conventional methods such as amniocentesis.

This will raise new questions about how society will handle this information. Will parents be deprived of a free decision and forced into abortion?⁴ Will pregnant women be urged to have a blood sample drawn, because this procedure seems easy, cheap and “riskless”? In my opinion, ethical considerations in clinical genetics will largely contribute to “good clinical practice” – in the truest sense of the word. I hope that *The Application of Clinical Genetics* will give clinical geneticists a platform to disseminate their results and to envision where the new findings may lead. From my point of view, it is not the aim of clinical genetics to make genetically-caused diseases disappear, but to have a scientific basis from which to understand the pathophysiology of a disease, and to give better advice with regard to specific risk factors associated with genetic anomalies.

Lastly, I am happy to announce that *The Application of Clinical Genetics* is on its way to completing the inclusion process in PubMed Central, thus I expect a tremendous increase in the visibility of the articles, followed by a larger number of downloads, citations, and subsequently, more manuscript submissions.

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