

Editorial

This issue of *Nutrition Research Reviews* contains fewer papers than is normally the case: we normally publish about eight reviews in each issue, i.e. sixteen per year. There are several factors contributing to this: on the one hand the editors and publishers wanted to avoid the small delays in publication that have occurred with the last few issues; on the other, there have been several instances of authors failing to meet their agreed target dates. The latter problem seems to be getting more serious and is undoubtedly due to the ever-greater pressure on our time. A good review is more than just a catalogue of original research reports and it takes considerable time and effort to synthesize a body of information into an interesting, informative and forward-looking contribution.

However, the need for authoritative reviews has never been greater. With the ever-increasing rate of publication of papers describing original research, and all the calls on our time, many of us have become increasingly dependent on the sort of reviews published in *NRR*. The editors would like your views on the usefulness of the contents of *NRR* for preparing lectures, for example, and whether authors should be encouraged to include more diagrams and figures which could be used (with appropriate acknowledgement) as the basis of teaching aids.

In my last editorial I paid tribute to all those who contribute to the publication of *NRR*, but only gave referees a passing mention. I am pleased to say that, by and large, the editors of *NRR* do not have much trouble finding suitable referees and getting a quick response from them. Perhaps there is more personal reward in reading a review than an original paper. Certainly the high standard of the authors makes the referees' and editors' task relatively easy. Many journals list annually the names of those who have refereed papers during that year; the large numbers make it unlikely that anyone could guess with certainty which referee(s) had reviewed which paper and the principal of anonymity of referees is maintained. If *NRR* were to produce such a list it would be very easy to identify referees of particular reviews, given the relatively small number of papers each year. The fact that we do not produce such a list does not mean that we don't greatly appreciate the time and skill given to the journal by our referees. If you should be asked to handle one of our papers please accept with enthusiasm!

Despite its small size, this issue gives us the usual variety which, we believe, is one of the great strengths of *NRR*.

Lupins are known to many of us as garden flowers, but *van Barneveld* puts them into an agricultural role, with important nutritional advantages for both single-stomached and ruminant livestock. They are legumes and, as such, have the benefit of symbiotic bacteria in their roots to fix nitrogen, thus saving the need for application of nitrogenous fertilizers. They are also remarkably hardy, with some species being capable of growing where little else can. This review is a good example of the application of classical techniques for monitoring nutritional value to elucidate the optimum ways in which to include this exiting group of plants into animal foods.

In their review on nutrition and neurodevelopment *Dauncey and Bicknell* tackle a difficult and complex area which includes much terminology unfamiliar to many nutritionists. By their use of examples of experimental protocols they give us access to this important and topical subject, and show that, although we are to a large extent dependent on animal models, there has nevertheless been significant progress in the use of surveys and even prospective human studies.

Maughan deals with nutritional supplements believed by athletes to enhance their performance and therefore taken by many of them as a regular part of their diet. This review gives the scientific basis, where available, for their possible mode of action but concludes that a balanced diet for athletes is the same as for a sedentary person, but taken in greater quantities. Exceptions to this are creatinine, bicarbonate and caffeine, which have demonstrable benefits in terms of performance.

In contrast to the specific information given by *Maughan*, the review of *Horwath* is much more general and deals with what, to me at least, is a completely new approach to categorizing and manipulating behaviour, i.e. stages of change or transtheoretical model, which has been applied with apparent success to smoking. The author is careful not to make excessive claims for this approach, given the large differences between eating and smoking, but nevertheless generates sufficient optimism, by reference to a comprehensive survey of the literature, to convince this reader, at least, that it is an avenue worthy of further study.

As always, comments and suggestions to me at j.m.forbes@leeds.ac.uk

Mike Forbes
Leeds
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