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# Metabolism

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## Editorial

# Sixty-six years of Metabolism, Clinical and Experimental: The journey of a journal and opportunities and challenges looking ahead☆☆☆



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## 1. 1952–2018: History and vision of “Metabolism”

Launched in 1952, “*Metabolism: Clinical and Experimental*” (ISSN 0026-0495 [print] and 1532-8600 [electronic]) celebrates its 66th anniversary in 2018. This is thus an opportune time for reflection. “*Ex Quo and Quo Vadimus*”: what were the ideas and ideals of the founders, what has been the journal’s journey over the years, what are future opportunities and challenges and what should be our plans moving forward.

“*Metabolism*” was first published by Grune & Stratton Inc. (New York) in 1952 (Fig. 1a) [1] and has been continuously published since then. It was incorporated into W.B. Saunders (Philadelphia) in 1989 and then to Elsevier Science (USA), the predecessor of Elsevier Inc. (Amsterdam), in 2002. Elsevier continued to use the W.B. Saunders imprint for quite a few years after having incorporated the journal.

The first Editor-in-Chief of “*Metabolism*” was Dr. Samuel Soskin. Dr. Garfield G. Duncan succeeded Dr. Soskin in

January 1958 and served for 12 consecutive years [2]. Dr. James B. Fields took over the journal in January 1970 [3] and served continuously for 40 1/2 years [4], being one of the longest serving Editors-in-Chief in medical literature [4]. One of the authors, Dr. Christos S. Mantzoros took the reins of the journal in July 2010 [5,6], after a brief period of overlap with Dr. Fields, and has been serving the journal and our field since then. The first Editorial Board of the journal (1954; volume 3) can be seen in Fig. 1b. “*Metabolism*” is abstracted and indexed in almost all large databases, including but not limited to Medline/PubMed, Journal Citation Reports, EMBASE and Scopus. Current and older articles of “*Metabolism*” are available in the journal’s website ([www.journals.elsevier.com/metabolism](http://www.journals.elsevier.com/metabolism)) and “ScienceDirect” ([www.sciencedirect.com](http://www.sciencedirect.com)), a large database of scientific literature, operated by Elsevier, where articles since 1964 (volume 13) could be retrieved in electronic form. Major biomedical libraries carry all volumes back to the very first issue published in 1952.

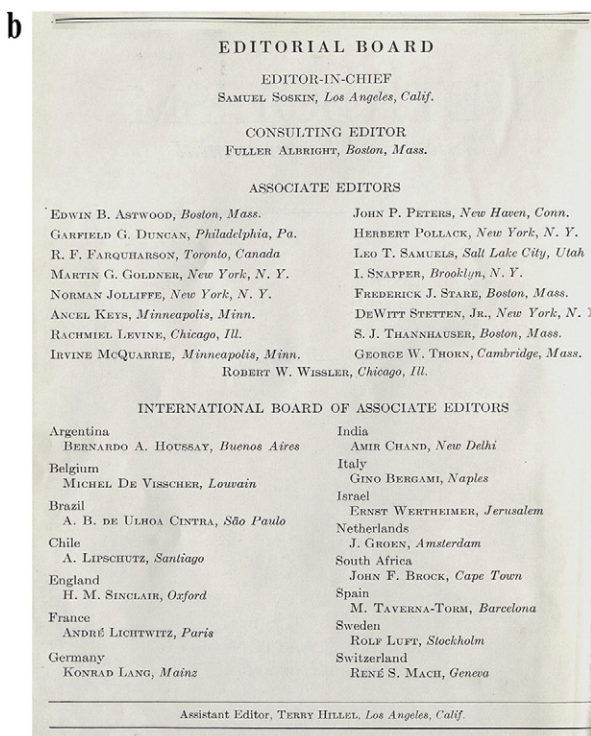
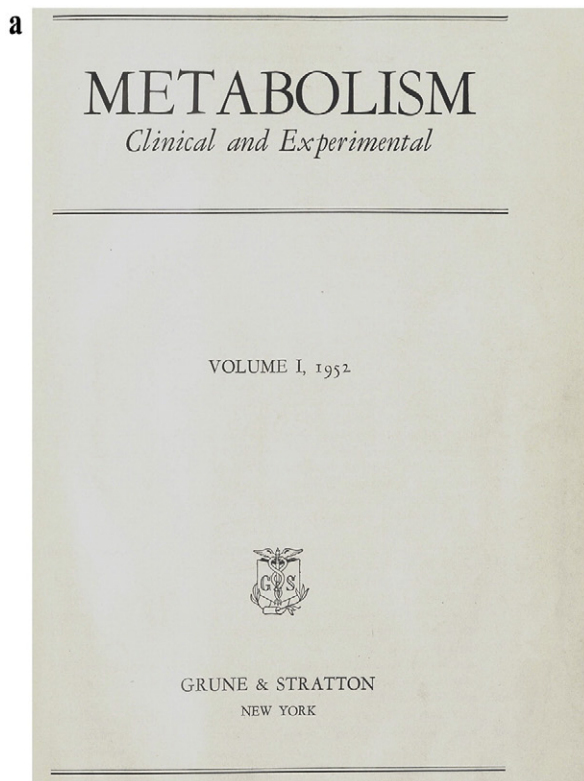
The principles that inspired the creation of “*Metabolism*” are outlined in the forward of the very first issue of “*Metabolism*” [7], in which the newly launched journal was described as a welcoming host for investigators devoted to clinical and experimental studies in the field of metabolism. “*Metabolism*” was highlighted not only as a medium through which the investigators could deposit and then disseminate new information and exchange ideas, but also as a helpful resource for the physician in keeping abreast of the many and accelerating novel applications in clinical practice affecting diagnosis, prognosis and therapy [7]. During that era, less than a decade after the end of the second world war, and the decades that ensued, the field of metabolism and relevant research had been continuously expanding and the availability of appropriate research tools was exploding. Thus, “*Metabolism*” seemed to be a necessity for the biomedical community internationally [7].

In an editorial during the journal’s very early years (1956), Dr. Soskin noted that textbooks and monographs could not follow the fast-moving age, because medical literature was expanding so rapidly that by the time a fact or idea was

Abbreviations: JCR, Journal Citations Report; SJR, SCImago journal rank; Q, quartile; SNIP, Source-Normalized Impact per Paper.

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**Fig. 1 – (a) The issue 1 of volume 1 of “Metabolism”, published in 1952. (b) The Editorial Board of “Metabolism” in January 1954.**

and interests [8]. Based on these considerations, “Metabolism” aspired to provide an expert help towards this need by “shifting the gold from the dross”, in other words not merely “adding to the plethora of articles”, but essentially striving to carry clinically oriented, critical digests and summaries of the current state of knowledge in metabolism. In this way, Dr. Soskin introduces the “special issues” of the journal, bringing together a collection of reviews and original articles, designed to provide a brief, but well-balanced and critical summary of the current status on a specific field of metabolism [8].

In his first editorial as Editor-in-Chief, Dr. Garfield G. Duncan aimed in 1958 to continue on the path of the same philosophy of a cutting edge, clinically oriented publication, including the publication of special issues [2]. He stated clearly that “Metabolism” serves as a medium for the dissemination of original studies in the field of clinical research, physiology and biochemistry that hold promise of clinical applications. Furthermore, he established a priority of preliminary reports of breakthrough research for publication in “Metabolism”, thus facilitating their early publication and dissemination [2]. During the 12 years he was Editor-in-Chief, “Metabolism” continued its successful progression and continued serving as “a bridge” between investigators and clinicians [9].

In 1958, “Metabolism” started printing the abstract at the head rather than the end of each article, so as to make it easier to be read and thus to save the reader time. Abstract, regarded as the “face” of the article, had been already considered to be the most-frequently read part of the article, briefly providing to the reader the main idea, results and conclusions [10]. In 1959, “Metabolism” set higher standards for abstracts targeting to contain “all the meat of the papers”: a word limit was set (250 words) and authors were asked to meet the specifications required from abstracting services, including “Biological Abstracts” [10].

“Metabolism” was published bimonthly up to the end of 1959 and has transitioned to a monthly publication since 1960 (volume 9) to accommodate the increasing numbers of superior papers submitted, to facilitate prompt publication of accepted papers and to keep pace with the rapid growth of research in the field of metabolism [11]. The increase in quality submissions and the workload to the Editorial Board had increased so much by 1960 that when the backlog of accepted papers was such that a newly submitted paper could not be published within six months from date of acceptance, the manuscript was returned to the authors immediately without editorial processing to avoid any delays in its publication [11].

Dr. James B. Field continued the vision and policy of his predecessors, but also extended them to engulf an environment of an ever expanding research [3]. By 1970, “Metabolism” was a success story with steadily improving scientific quality, significant increase in subscriptions and a notable increase in submissions from leaders in the field worldwide [3,9]. During his tenure, “Metabolism” continued to bridge investigators and physicians, by disseminating translational, but also basic and clinical research. Dr. Field also introduced the Letters to the Editor and Author’s Replies in “Metabolism”, as a platform of dialogue and exchange of ideas and arguments between the

“embalmed in a book”, it was all-too-often “dead” and, in addition, it was almost impossible for a practicing physician to select and read all articles that were pertinent to his needs

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