

## EDITORIAL

### Briefs from the Literature

THE BRIEFS FROM THE LITERATURE section is three years old; a review both of the objectives and the attainment of these objectives seems indicated. Before publication of the first BRIEFS in 1957, a year was spent in discussion of policy and organization. Whether the decisions of the Editorial Board have proven to be correct can be determined only by you, the readers, since it was for your benefit that the section was planned.

The first and obvious question to be decided was whether or not an abstract section should be added to ANESTHESIOLOGY. Interest in an earlier abstract section had gradually declined until the section was discontinued. In spite of this, the fact remained that items of interest to anesthesiologists were being published in so many journals that it was almost impossible for one individual to search out and review them all. It seemed logical that if this task were divided among an organized group, the results could be of benefit to all of our Journal readers. Plans for a revitalized abstract section in the Journal were considered.

At this stage of planning the Editorial Board learned of the intention to publish an abstract journal, *Survey of Anesthesiology*. After consultation with the Editor of this new publication, it was apparent that the type of abstract section we were considering would not duplicate the more complete type of abstract with critique planned for *Survey of Anesthesiology*. In fact, we agreed a short type abstract might supplement rather than detract from a detailed abstract or the original article. The presentation of published thoughts and ideas as brief and concise as possible became the established aim of *Briefs from the Literature*. An effort was to be made to attract readers by offering the most information for their reading time. The intent was not to present details to be read in lieu of reading the original article, but rather to entice and stimulate readers to refer to the original article for details about sub-

jects in which they are interested. The items of interest to an anesthesiologist are not always indicated in the title or listed in the summary of an article, but may be located only by reading the entire article. All types of articles were to be abstracted, although difficulty was expected in preparing a brief factual abstract of some articles, particularly reviews.

The first step in organizing the abstract section was to select the journals to be reviewed so material could be collected which would appeal to the wide range of interests of our readers. Somewhat arbitrarily the decision was made not to review state medical journals or anesthesia journals printed in English. The former were considered to be too numerous and in general to contain too scanty information about anesthesia; the latter were regarded as an already concentrated source of information easily available. Abstracters were engaged who were in different types of anesthesia practice and who represented a wide variety of interests. Each abstracter was assigned 4 to 6 journals from the 100 which had been selected for review.

The selection of abstracts to be published has always been a problem. Even though each abstracter has not always submitted his assigned material by each publication dead line, more abstracts have been prepared than could be published. The number has to be balanced against the amount of material available for publication in other sections of ANESTHESIOLOGY, but the desires of our readers should also be known and considered.

In three years 1,200 abstracts have been published with an estimated expenditure of over 2,000 man hours of effort. Whether or not the results have justified this effort can be decided only by the readers of the Journal. Comments and constructive suggestions are welcome.

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