Cancer Discovery at One Year: The Editors’ Interim Analysis

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Our interim analysis is strikingly positive as Cancer Discovery enters into its second year, and we hope the journal will become an increasingly indispensable resource to both basic and clinical cancer researchers.

As Cancer Discovery approaches its first anniversary, we would like to share with you our initial assessment of the life and health of this young journal of the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR). If we were to analyze the journal in a similar fashion as would be done with a clinical trial for a new and exciting compound, we would call this a prespecified interim analysis, also known as an “early look.” Early looks are by nature tricky. If the findings are positive but do not cross a given boundary, they could simply be false-positive. However, if they are negative to begin with, this does not mean that the study results will be negative after more prolonged follow-up.

First, let us look at the Methods of the journal. The concept behind Cancer Discovery was, and is, to be a single source for the breadth of important cancer research–related information. To do so, we have aimed to publish high-impact, peer-reviewed, original research articles and reviews; perspectives written by experts in the field that break down complex issues and point us forward; and news and research watch summaries of important articles to help keep our readers abreast of new developments. The editorial effort at AACR has been significant: We publish articles online daily, news and research watch summaries online weekly, and a print issue every month. In addition to this high-impact content, we add value through podcasts and videos, press releases and press conferences, digital and mobile editions, and professional redrawing of figures. We also offer CME credit to reviewers. The illustrations and visual presentation of the published work have achieved a new standard in the industry. The journal’s research articles are presented as if they were pieces of art. We believe they are.

When it comes to the Results, we have been simply overwhelmed by the response of the scientific community to this young journal. In the journal’s brief history, we have published fantastic articles that span the spectrum of cancer research, from basic science to translational science and epidemiology, as well as reports on clinical trials. Other topics featured in the journal have included genomics, tumor microenvironment, immunology, xenopatients, technology, and therapeutics. Cancer Discovery has received several hundred submissions through October 31, 2011, and the current acceptance rate for original research articles is 17%. Because of our commitment to publish only the very best, we are not planning to make a substantial increase in the number of published articles per issue. However, we are confident that this policy will only enhance the interest of our readership and encourage researchers to submit their best work to our journal. With regard to interest in the scientific community, Cancer Discovery articles have already been cited in many other prestigious publications, and views for online content are at an equal or higher rate as for the other AACR journals.

In today’s world, it is important that publications are quickly indexed. Cancer Discovery is currently indexed by Web of Science, BIOSIS Previews, Chemical Abstracts, and Google Scholar. Furthermore, we are working diligently at having it indexed by the National Library of Medicine as soon as possible. We are confident that our articles will be highly quoted and that this will be reflected in a robust Impact Factor, even in the initial round.

In this effort, we have been blessed by the support of Mark W. Landis, PhD, and Judy N. Quong, PhD, Cancer Discovery’s Executive Editors, together with the growing staff both in Boston and Philadelphia. We are also deeply indebted to the dedicated and bright members of the Editorial Board, who work tirelessly in the pursuit and review of manuscripts and are heavily involved in shaping the direction of the journal. The touch and feel of the journal are largely a reflection of their great work.

The Discussion, like those in our favorite articles, is short and simple. Our interim analysis is strikingly positive. Turning again to clinical and statistical jargon, we have achieved all the prespecified goals and crossed all the defined boundaries, thereby eliminating the possibility of a false-positive assessment. To those of you who have shown your trust in us by sending your work to Cancer Discovery, we are deeply thankful. And to our community of cancer researchers, from clinical investigators to basic scientists, we would like to reiterate that we are here to serve you, to learn about your work, to review your articles in a record-breaking short time, and to treat your articles with the same care as you would yourself. We are fully committed to continue to improve Cancer Discovery and to consolidate it as an asset to our community. As Cancer Discovery approaches its second year, we conclude that the journal has moved beyond the experimental phase and become an established reality in the world of cancer publishing. We hope it will become an ever-more indispensable companion to basic and clinical cancer researchers and appeal to a broader readership as well.

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