

A new role for the *Bulletin*

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With this issue, the *Bulletin of the World Health Organization* has a new look. As it starts its 52nd year, WHO's *Bulletin* also takes on a new and bigger role in public health, appearing monthly and covering an even wider range of topics than before. Digests containing selected articles will also appear twice a year in Chinese, French and Spanish.

Since 1948, the *Bulletin* has been reporting internationally important health research, much of it from developing countries. Now two of WHO's other journals, the *World health statistics quarterly* and the *World health forum*, have been incorporated into the *Bulletin* to make it, as its subtitle states, "the international journal of public health". By merging these journals with their separate emphases on epidemiology, information exchange and science, WHO aims to bring together all that is best in the theory and practice of public health worldwide. It is a mark of the Organization's commitment to seeing health from a broad perspective that integrates disciplines and combines scientific enquiry with policy analysis.

Building on its well-established foundation, the *Bulletin* will be the place to find not just articles on the latest internationally relevant scientific research but also reports and commentaries on a wide range of health-related topics of direct interest to health practitioners and policy-makers. It will report regularly on WHO's own research, such as that on the global burden of disease and injury, and will encompass issues such as health ethics, the financing of health care, and

research policy. Readers will be invited to express their views in letters to the editor, there will be round table discussions on timely and controversial issues, and reviews of books and electronic media will keep readers up to date with the latest sources of information in international public health.

While regular *Bulletin* readers will notice many changes in this issue — both in content and in presentation — the aim of the *Bulletin* remains simple and straightforward. It is to provide a sound basis of evidence that will contribute to the achievement of better health for all. The *Bulletin* will not shrink from publishing well-founded arguments that are critical of current paradigms or the policies of governments and agencies, including WHO. To support this ambitious task, a number of internationally recognized figures are being recruited to serve on the journal's editorial board to guide policy and provide expert assessment of all material submitted for publication. Together with an internal WHO team of experts, the board will ensure the highest possible standards for the Organization's flagship journal.

WHO's standpoint is clear: as a platform for the widest range of health-related information and analysis, the *Bulletin* will further the greatest equity and efficiency, and the highest quality, in health policies and programmes worldwide. We cannot be satisfied with less. ■

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