

Editorial: Restructuring the *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*

As a result of a review of all its publications by the Royal Statistical Society, a major restructuring of its journal involving *The Statistician* will take effect from the beginning of 2004:

- (a) Series A, C and D of the *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society* are being combined and refocused as just two journals, with the new Series A increasing in frequency;
- (b) Series B of the journal will remain largely unchanged;
- (c) a new magazine will be created which is aimed at all users of statistics.

The three series A, B and C will not only encompass but also broaden the remit of the current four series and provide a gradation in technical complexity. At one end of the spectrum, the new Series A will concentrate on substantive statistical issues while, at the other, Series B will continue to focus on the methodological development of the subject of statistics. In between, the new Series C will cover innovative techniques and analyses of real data problems.

A journal bearing the subtitle ‘Series D’ will hence cease to be published after volume 52 this year, and the title *The Statistician* will no longer be used. However, the sort of material that *The Statistician* has published particularly over recent years, to further the understanding of statistics and statistical methods and to promote their application to a wide audience, will easily and naturally continue to find a home most likely in the new Series A and C.

Papers either still under consideration for *The Statistician* at the time of the change or submitted to it henceforth until the transition is complete will be redirected and considered instead for the most appropriate of the other series. Their new terms of reference will be as follows.

The aim of the *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, Series A (*Statistics in Society*), is to publish papers that demonstrate how statistical thinking, design and analyses play a vital role in all walks of life and benefit society in general. There is no restriction on subject-matter—any interesting, topical and revelatory applications of statistics are welcome. For example, important applications of statistical methods in medicine, business and commerce, industry, economics and finance, education and teaching, physical and biomedical sciences, the environment, the law, government and politics, demography, psychology, sociology and sport all fall within the journal’s remit. The journal is therefore aimed at a wide statistical audience and at professional statisticians in particular. Its emphasis is on well-written and clearly reasoned quantitative approaches to problems in the real world rather than the exposition of technical detail. Thus, although the methodological basis of papers must be sound, it need not be innovative. Of particular interest are papers on topical or contentious statistical issues, papers which give reviews or *exposés* of current statistical concerns and papers which demonstrate how appropriate statistical thinking has contributed to our understanding of important substantive questions. Historical, professional and biographical contributions are also welcome, as are discussions of methods of data collection and of ethical issues, provided that all such papers have substantial statistical relevance.

The *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, Series B (*Statistical Methodology*), aims to publish

high quality papers on the methodological aspects of statistics. The objective of papers should be to contribute to the understanding of statistical methodology and/or to develop and improve statistical methods; any mathematical theory should be directed towards these aims. The kinds of contribution considered include descriptions of new methods of collecting or analysing data, with the underlying theory, an indication of the scope of application and preferably a real example. Also considered are comparisons, critical evaluations and new applications of existing methods, contributions to probability theory which have a clear practical bearing (including the formulation and analysis of stochastic models), statistical computation or simulation where original methodology is involved and original contributions to the foundations of statistical science. Reviews of methodological techniques are also considered. A paper, even if correct and well presented, is likely to be rejected if it only presents straightforward special cases of previously published work, if it is of mathematical interest only, if it is too long in relation to the importance of the new material that it contains or if it is dominated by computations or simulations of a routine nature.

The *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, Series C (*Applied Statistics*), promotes papers that are both driven by real life problems and make a novel contribution to the subject, for instance by adapting or developing methodology, or by demonstrating the proper application of new or existing statistical methods to them. Applications should be central to papers, to motivate the work and to justify any methodological developments, and case-studies may therefore be particularly appropriate, including some contextual experimental details if relevant. Papers describing interdisciplinary work are especially welcome, as are those that give interesting novel applications of existing methodology or provide new insights into the practical application of techniques, and papers explaining innovative analysis of generic applied problems but not necessarily focused on a particular data set also have a place in Series C. Short communications may also be appropriate. Methodological papers that are not motivated by a genuine application are not acceptable; nor are papers that include only brief numerical illustrations or that mainly describe simulation studies of properties of statistical techniques. However, papers describing developments in statistical computing are encouraged, provided that they are driven by practical examples. Extended algebraic treatment should be avoided. Papers on design issues (e.g. in relation to experiments, surveys or observational studies) that arise from specific practical problems should feature an adequate description of a substantial application and a justification for any new theory, but they need not include the discussion or analysis of data.

This therefore is the first issue of the last volume of *The Statistician*. The journal came into existence in 1950 as *The Incorporated Statistician*, the journal of the then Association of Incorporated Statisticians. It modified its name in 1962 after the Association became the Institute of Statisticians, and it became Series D of the *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society* on merger of the two bodies in 1993. The title thus has had a long and distinguished history and has published many fine papers, of which it is justly proud.

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(*Joint Editors*)